

CHRISTIAN
EVIDENCES

BY
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"THE GOSPEL AND ITS ELEMENTS."



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PREFACE.

THIS work is not professedly controversial, but designed to present to the reader a cumulative argument for the truth of Christianity, from the rational basis on which it is founded—the divine resting on the supernatural; from the nature of its introduction, in harmony with its spiritual attributes; from the tokens of divinity it originally exhibited; from the validity of its claims—the highest that could be demanded; from its early, rapid, and universal spread; from its authoritative summons to hear the voice of God, and to see the arm of Jehovah, as revealed therein. The argument in this book, in favor of the truth and divine origin of Christianity, if not in its conception, certainly in its con-

struction, differs materially from any known to the author. He now offers the work not as a substitute for, but in addition to, others of a more elaborate character, on the same inexhaustible subject. Each successive step in the logical deduction is demanded, in the reading of this book, to realize and feel the force of the conclusions required. Examine it carefully, critically, thoroughly; and weigh every argument fairly; and if in so doing, the doubts of the sceptical shall be solved, the wavering be established, and a profounder interest be awakened in behalf of the claims of Jesus of Nazareth to the homage of mankind, the work shall not have been written in vain.

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CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES.

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

MANY have sought to find reasons for the early and rapid success of the first teachers of the Christian religion—the original Apostles of Christ—independent of the miracles which attended their mission; but all attempts to set them aside have signally failed. It must be admitted, and the concessions of unbelievers, both ancient and modern, warrant the assumption, that it generally prevailed in the first century of its establishment. The causes which led to this so extraordinary and triumphant success, believers have attributed to its supernatural and divine accompaniments; though various attempts have been made on the part of its enemies to account for it in the absence of these testimonials of its divinity.

It is the object of this work to show that the reasons assigned, on the part of its opposers, are weak and defective, and wholly unworthy of confidence; and that the original ground relied upon, stands to this day invulnerable and unmoved, after all that its worst enemies have said against it.

Some of the grounds of defense we shall offer may not be new or unknown to the intelligent reader; but it will do no harm to refresh his memory with the arguments which others have adduced; and by presenting them in a new form, with the impression they have made on the mind of the author, he may enlist more fully his attention to their serious and earnest consideration.

The reader will find, as is confidently believed, in this work, many trains of thought and logical deductions which will not be found elsewhere, on the premises assumed; and therefore the author cannot but think, that it is his duty to present to the public what he deems to be an unanswerable argument for the truth of Christianity; and in so doing, afford a justifiable reason for adding another work to the many which have been written and published on this subject.

It will be difficult now to find much that is new or original in the main pleadings on this great question. The germs of thought, if not

the same arguments, offered in this work, others may have presented; but he is not aware that the subject, as a whole, in the manner herein considered, has been hitherto elaborated. Of this, however, the public is the best and the safest judge, and to it we make our appeal. There is always more or less vanity in the claims to originality too often set up. We have long since learned that there is nothing absolutely "new under the sun," and that all men have been receivers and givers. The action of the world upon us commences with our birth, and ends only with our death. How little would there be left to any one, legitimately his own, if dispossessed of all that he had received from his predecessors or cotemporaries!

In regard to Christianity, it must be admitted that there were serious and formidable difficulties in the way of its introduction and establishment, and of its general spread, in the early ages of its existence. These were not imaginary, but real and formidable difficulties, enough to abate the zeal and cool the ardor of the boldest and the most enterprising and self-confident; and more than sufficient to deter and dishearten the weak and the irresolute, not to say the wicked and the designing.

Christianity had its origin and arose among a,

people thoroughly schooled in every thing connected with the nature, objects, and evidences of a divine institution, or what should legitimately characterize one. The Jewish nation were not only well instructed on this head, but they were the only people who could properly lay any claims to having received one at the hands of God. They professed to have been honored above all other nations with supernatural communications from on high. And the subject had been fully examined, and all its parts inquired into, for the space of fifteen centuries. They were an ancient people, none more so. It was their glory and their boast. None had such an ancestry, none could claim so great antiquity. Israel had existed before the birth of the Assyrian, the Medo-Persian, the Grecian, or the Roman empires. It overlooked as it antedated them all; and during its entire history they had been in possession of the writings of Moses and also the books of the Prophets, the Psalms of David, and the chronicles of their judges and kings. Many are the references found in these writings to the evidences and criteria of a divine commission, with which they were familiar; and after the lapse of three thousand years, nothing can be added to them. No new principles since their date have been conceived or developed by

the wisest or the profoundest minds. They were not only just and reasonable, but superior to any found elsewhere; exhibiting an amount of intelligence and a power of discrimination, which leave nothing for us to demand on all the premises in the consideration of this subject.

In proof of this, we call your attention to the mission of Moses. He was not only conscious of acting under a divine call and commission; but he gave the most abundant evidences of the fact, not only to those in whose behalf he was sent, but also to the nation from whom he sought and obtained their deliverance. We do not now, though we justly might, offer this in proof of his divine mission; but we shall not anticipate our plea, by assuming what in the judgment of the reader ought to be proved. We simply refer to this case to show that he fully understood the nature and evidences of such a commission, and presented the only safe and satisfactory grounds on which it should rest; and that the nation of Israel were fully instructed in regard to every thing which should enter into and accompany such a commission.

Hear then what is said on this subject. "And the Lord said to Moses: Sec, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet." "And the Egyptians shall

know that I am the Lord, when I stretch forth mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them. And Moses and Aaron did as the Lord commanded them, so did they." "And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, saying, When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, saying: Show a miracle for you; then thou shalt say unto Aaron, take thy rod and cast it before Pharaoh, and it shall become a serpent. And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did so as the Lord had commanded; and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent."* After this followed the ten plagues, "that the Egyptians might know that I am the Lord when I stretch forth my hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them." These were the "signs and wonders" in the presence of Pharaoh and of his people, which should give such demonstrations of the presence and interposition of the God of Abraham in behalf of his chosen people. They were open, public, sensible displays of omnipotence, that no one could mistake or misinterpret.

Justly has it been said, that "Moses was either an enthusiast, a dupe, or an impostor. That

* Exod. vii. 1, 5, 8, 9, 10.

he was not an enthusiast, may be argued from his learning—he was versed in all the learning of the Egyptians; from his education among the courtiers of Pharaoh, from the diffidence with which he received the first annunciation of his mission, from the admirable suitableness of his law to the accomplishment of the objects proposed — the knowledge therein displayed of human nature — the connection of laws politically necessary with religion, &c. He could not have been a dupe; for if the appearance in the burning bush had not been real — if he had been deceived in the evidences of his mission — if the miracles wrought to convince him that he was the chosen prophet of God had been only natural phenomena, he could not have inferred from them that he was to be the legislator and deliverer of the Jews. Neither was he an impostor. An impostor would not have chosen to suffer affliction with a degraded race, rather than to indulge in the gaities and fascinations of a court. An impostor would not have exposed himself to the danger of death by vindicating the cause of the oppressed. He would not, if banished to a desert, be contented with his lot, forget his schemes of ambition, intermarry among the natives of an obscure province, and calmly sink into the condition of a shepherd. Even if

he were at length to rouse from this strange lethargy, and resolve to deliver his countrymen or perish in the attempt, an impostor would have proceeded with some address and policy. He would not enter abruptly into the presence of an absolute sovereign, and peremptorily insist on the liberation of a race of useful slaves. Neither would an impostor have committed himself by predicting a series of miraculous judgments if these slaves were not permitted to emigrate. If Moses, too, had been either of these, he could not have conquered armies without fighting; or impressed a whole nation with imaginary terrors; or guided and fed a whole nation for forty years in the wilderness. He would not have compelled, and he could not have persuaded the Egyptians and their king to resign their dominion to the Israelites, unless he had been possessed of powers more than human. That is, he was a true prophet—he wrought miracles—he was the character he professed to be. The mere fact that Moses was not a true prophet, and yet delivered the Israelites, would be a much greater miracle than any he is related to have performed."*

It is evident then, from the references made to the writings of Moses, and by a further appeal

* *Horae Mosaicae.*

to the writings of the prophets, that the nation of Israel had in their hands all the criteria of what should, and of right ought to constitute a divine mission. In regard to this, they not only had the means of obtaining a correct judgment; but by their daily reading and study of the sacred books, they must have been fully acquainted with the subject, and gave assurance of the fact, not only during the different stages of their previous history, but at the time of the Saviour's mission and the ministry of his chosen apostles.

Indeed, so far back as the times of Abraham, the most abundant evidences may be found, that he, the father of the nation, was not ignorant of this question. When the patriarch asked the Lord, "Whereby shall I know that I shall inherit" the land of Canaan, when as yet he had no heir by Sarah his wife, he was commanded to "take a heifer of three years old, and a she-goat three years old, and a ram three years old, and a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon, and slay and divide them and lay them upon an altar. And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and lo, a horror of great darkness fell upon him; and he said to Abram: Know of a surety, that thy seed shall be a stranger in the land that is not theirs, and shall serve them. And they shall afflict them

four hundred years; and also that nation whom they shall serve, will I judge; and afterward shall they come out with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full. And it came to pass that when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold, a smoking furnace and a burning lamp, that passed between these pieces. In that same day, the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates."*

These separate appearances and mysterious symbols, and the covenant entered into with Abram over the slain and divided animals and birds, were designed to give him the most solemn and certain assurances, not only of his call and commission, but of the design and purpose of the Almighty with reference to his posterity, for thousands of years to come. He therefore could labor under no mistake in regard to the events connected with the revelations made him on this occasion; and under the strong persuasion that what God had promised he was able to perform, he not only believed, but his faith was rendered

* Gen. xv. 8-18.

perfect by his entire obedience to the will of God.

The reader will examine carefully the following scriptures on this head. They will show how God, in a special manner, gave the most satisfactory assurances to all those whom he raised up and commissioned to act in his name; and not only to them, but also to others in whose behalf they acted, and to whom they had been sent.

In the case of Gideon, who was raised up and ordered to redeem Israel out of the hands of the Midianites. He was the least in his father's house, and his family was poor in Manasseh. In order to be assured that God had sent him, he said: "If now I have found grace in thy sight, then show me a sign that thou talkest with me." The sign was given him; he was commanded to "take the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and lay them upon the rock, and pour out the broth, and he did so;" and "the angel of the Lord put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and there rose up Ere out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes."*

We refer to the case of Elijah, in the days of Ahab, in the trial of the false prophets.

* Judges vi. 17, 20, 21.

"Let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word; then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt-sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench."*

The recovery also of Hezekiah from sickness, and the adding fifteen years to his life, according to the promise of God. He asked: "What shall be the sign that the Lord will heal me, and that I shall go up into the house of the Lord the third day? And Isaiah said: This sign shalt thou have of the Lord, that the Lord will do the thing that he hath spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten degrees, or go back ten degrees?" He demanded that the shadow should return backward ten degrees, and it did so.†

Many testimonies of a similar kind might be cited; but these will suffice to indicate that the nation of Israel had the fullest instruction, both by precept and example, in reference to the proper signs and credentials which should accompany a divine messenger and his message.

It will further appear that the Jews, in the times of the Messiah, were not unmindful of the lessons thus taught them and their fathers, as

* 1 Kings xviii. 36,38.

† 2 Kings xx. 8, 9, 10.

found in the sacred books of their nation. Thus, when John the Baptist appeared among them, they were struck with wonder at the fact, that he "did no miracle," and yet claimed to be a prophet. But, nevertheless, they acknowledged that all things that he spoke concerning Jesus of Nazareth had been fulfilled.* These things, spoken by the harbinger of Jesus, did not refer to events lying in the distant future, as they would not have been adapted to the ends proposed; but they were fulfilling before their own eyes, and answered all the designs to be effected by miracles of an outward and sensible character. The fulfillment of these predictions were to them as satisfactory, or should have been; as if he had wrought special miracles in proof of his prophetic mission to the nation.

In the memorable interview of Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, with Jesus of Nazareth, he at once recognized his claims as a divine messenger, from the supernatural testimonials he presented. "We know that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him."† And how often was this demand made at the hands of the Saviour—"What sign showest thou, that we may believe"?

* John x. 41, 42. † Ib. iii. 2.

The effect of the miracles wrought by the Saviour, show that they fully recognized their necessity and understood their use. As an example, we refer to the case of the blind man restored to sight. "How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?" "If this man were not of God, he could do nothing"*—that is, he could not have opened the eyes of the blind.

Jesus himself, repeatedly appealed to the miracles, wrought openly in the presence of the people, as affording the necessary credentials of a divine messenger. "But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me."† "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though you believe not me, believe the works; that we may know and believe that the Father is in me and I in him."‡

It will appear from the facts already referred to, that no people had so much light on all these premises as the Jews; and none were better able to judge of their nature, fitness and design. Our Saviour refused to rely alone either on the testimony of John, or on his own assumptions, as the grounds on which he should be re-

* John ix. 16, 33. † Ib- v- 36. ‡ Ib. x. 37, 38.

ceived as the Messiah of the Jewish nation—the Son of God. But that he uniformly appealed to his miracles, as the proper basis for their confidence in him.

No one ever gave higher honor to the reason and judgment of men than did our Saviour. He refused a blind attachment to his person, and an ignorant acknowledgment of his claims. He demanded no stronger faith in his mission than the credentials furnished would justify; and in their absence, or inability to form an intelligent judgment of their nature, no one was held responsible for his unbelief. Indeed, Christianity is a question of fact; and must be examined and proved, as all such questions should be, by testimonies in harmony with the facts themselves. It has to do, not with a theory, or an intellectual system, whether of morals or philosophy; not merely with a divine institution, but chiefly with a person; not primarily with the religion taught, but with the author of it; and therefore it commences not with a system, but with him who taught it.

Before his religion could be received, his own claims as "The Messiah—The Son of God," must be firmly established; and this was done by the works, supernatural and divine, which he wrought. The whole subject, both in regard to the Author

of Christianity and the system he developed, is addressed to our faith, and demands a rational and divine basis to rest upon; and what more satisfactory than the signs and wonders which accompanied its introduction?

It will appear that several significant names have been appropriated to the miracles recorded in the New Testament; and the wisdom of this arrangement will be seen by looking at the following considerations. No one word, indeed, could adequately express all that is represented by these separate acts. Like all great events, springing from the same cause, they present many sides, and must be contemplated from a variety of angles, according as they may strike the observation of the beholders.

It was not simply to avoid tautology, or from a refined and fastidious taste, of a mere verbal character, that the writers of the New Testament employ sometimes one and again several words, often in the same sentence, to express the general idea to the popular mind of what, in fact, constitutes a miracle. But there were reasons, growing out of the nature of the several distinct acts, under this head of miracles, that made the use of these specific words necessary.

They are called sometimes "wonders," and again "signs"—"powers"—"works." To take

the first, viz. "wonders." In this the effect produced on the mind of the beholder is transferred to the work itself which produced it; an effect often graphically portrayed by the Evangelists, when giving an account of the miracles of the Redeemer. As an evidence of this effect, we refer to the healing of the paralytic. "And immediately he arose, took up his bed, and went forth before them all: insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it in this fashion."*

This miracle was to those who beheld it a "wonder"—a marvel. Not because it was greater than any other of the Saviour's miracles, but the like of this they had never before seen. The miracle on the Sea of Galilee, in stilling the tempest, belongs to this class, as is evident from the effect produced on the minds of the disciples: "And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"† Christ walking on the sea and calming the tempest, when the disciples were threatened with shipwreck, also must be thus classified: "And they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered."‡

It will be seen that this word does not fully

* Mark ii. 12. † Ib- iv- 41. ‡ Ib. vi. 51.

express what is meant by a miracle. It touches the matter only at a distance—merely on the surface. There are many things that excite "wonder," both in Nature and in Art, which belong not to the domain of miracles. The ethical meaning of the miracle would be wholly lost, were blank astonishment, or gaping wonder, all that had been aroused by it, inasmuch as this effect may be produced in a thousand ways, independent of supernatural causes. It is not a little remarkable, rather it is singularly characteristic of the miracles of the New Testament, that this name "wonders" is never applied to them, but in connection with other names. They are generally called "signs and wonders;" — "signs" and "powers" alone; but never "wonders" alone. It is not that the miracle, considered simply as a "wonder," which the astonished beholder can reduce to no law with which he is acquainted, is even as such, not without its special meaning and purpose — that purpose being that it should startle the beholder from the mere dream of sense, by which he may be earth-bound to the visible and the material. And even though the "wonder" may not in itself be considered, as it really was, an appeal from on high to what was spiritual in man, it should nevertheless be regarded as a trumpet blast, heralding the King

of the spiritual empire; and as a summons from him to "Hear, oh earth!" the words he should speak; and to open their eyes to the spiritual appeal he was about to address them. It is not surprising that he who was called "The Wonderful" should himself do "wonders"—the greater astonishment would be if he did not. It is God alone who does "wonderful things." And was not the Messiah "God manifest in the flesh?"

But the miracle, besides being a "wonder," was also a "sign"—a token of the near presence and manifest working of the God of creation. In this word, the ethical end and purpose of the miracle appears most prominently, as in "wonders" the least. They are "signs" and pledges of something superior to and beyond themselves, just as the lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night, were for "signs" and for seasons, for days and years," indicated the power of God, who said, "Let there be light: and there was light." "Ask thou a 'sign' of the Lord thy God: ask it either in the depth, or in the height above."* Whatever that sign may be, it was a "sign from the Lord." The "signs" done were not so valuable for what they were in themselves, as for what they indicated of the

presence of God, and of the grace and mercy which were now at hand. They were the burnished links of that chain that bound once more heaven with earth. They were the constellated stars, which shine so gloriously in the spiritual universe, and were now brought within the earthly vision of man. They were a banner hung up on high, not merely of "strange device," but of heavenly garniture, attracting all eyes, and summoning all hearts to enlist under it—the banner of the Lord of Hosts, covered over with heraldry divine. These "signs" were from heaven, and gave indication of a higher, spiritual world beyond us, to which humanity was called upon to look. They were the unmistakable seals of a heavenly commission, that it was death and perdition not to honor and revere. The apostles in their mission to the world, had these "signs" conferred upon them. "And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with and confirming the word with 'signs' following."*

The word is frequently used in senses such as these: "What sign showest thou?" "We would see a sign from thee." "Show us a sign from heaven." These requests were made when the Jews demanded of the Lord, to justify the

* Mark xvi. 20; Acts xiv. 3; Heb. ii. 4.

claims which he urged, or the things which he did in their presence, to show the special authority under which he acted: and Paul speaks of himself as having the "signs of an apostle,"* or the tokens which should be presented by one who acted under so high a commission.

Frequently also the miracles are styled "powers," or "mighty works," which alone could be performed by God. As in the term "wonders," the effect gives the name to the cause which produced it; so the name "powers," as the cause, gives its name to the effect of the miracle. The "power" belongs to God, but has been transferred to the messenger he has sent, and by which he has been divinely equipped. "And Stephen, being full of faith and 'power,' did 'great wonders' and miracles among the people." "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with 'power.'"†

These three terms, as applied to the miracles recorded in the New Testament, occur several times together. "Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as you yourselves know." "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you

* 2 Cor. xii. 12. † Acts vi. 8; x. 38.

in all patience in signs and wonders and mighty deeds."*

Whatever then may be their name, the miracles are all descriptive of the same works, and indicate the presence of the same omnipotent hand. An example of one of our Saviour's miracles shows how it may be, at one and the same time, all these. In the healing of the paralytic, to which already we have referred, it was regarded by the beholders as a "wonder;" for they were all amazed.† It was also a "power;" for the healed man, at the bidding of Christ, "arose, took up his bed and walked;" and it was also a "sign," for it gave token that one greater than man was found present among them. It stood in connection with a higher fact, of which it was both a sign and seal, viz., that "the Son of Man had authority on the earth to forgive sins"—a prerogative alone belonging to God. This miracle of wonder and of power, was a visible sign, to all present, that he who wrought it had authority to forgive sins, even in his lowest and humblest state, while appearing only to be "the Son of Man."

A further term by which John the Apostle, frequently names the miracles of Christ, is strikingly significant. With him they are simply

* Rom. xv. 19. † Mark ii. 1-12.

"works." For the "works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me." "Jesus answered and said unto them. I have done one work, and ye all marvel." "Many good works have I showed you from my Father; for which of those works do you stone me ?"* Thus the wonderful in the pages of John, who was so deeply penetrated with the ethical nature of the miracles of Christ,—the wonderful is only the natural form of "working" for Him who is "God manifest in the flesh;" in whom all the fullness of divinity substantially dwells. He must, by the necessity of his nature, not simply by his office, bring forth "works" greater than man's. They are but "the outermost circle of which he is the centre." Having admitted the great doctrine of the Incarnation of the Word, all else, however wonderful, follows as a matter of course. These miracles are but a portion of the fruit, after its kind, which the tree of life brings forth; and may, with a deep significance, be styled "works of Christ," with no further addition or explanation. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." And as an artist is known by his works, so Jesus

* John x. 32; vii. 21; x. 25, 32. Ibid xiv. 11. 12; xv. 24.

was known by his. They were just the natural outgrowth of his divine nature; and wonderful as they are to us, they were not wonderful to him. Our faith should not stumble in the presence of Him who made all things by the word of his power; and who, if they were reduced to nothing, could reproduce them by the same creative word. A man is always greater than his works. The products of genius are never equal to the mind that wrought them; and we always feel, that great as they are, they bear no proportion to what the same mind, under other circumstances, is capable of doing. Marvelous as were the "works" wrought by the Messiah, they were done by Him who divested himself of the glory he had with the Father before the world was. Though God, he did not affect so much to appear in divine majesty, as to hide in human form "the thunder of his power." It was not how much of divinity he could put forth; but how little, to accomplish the great ends of his mission. He even promised the apostles to enable them to do greater works than his own.

Let us not then be startled from our faith by the signs and wonders, powers and mighty works, done by the Saviour, as though they were impossibilities; or, on the other hand, deem that

they were too great to demonstrate the truth of that system which had its origin in the infinite love of God to our fallen race. A love whose length and breadth and depth and height, so far surpassing human comprehension, may well seek new and ocean-like currents to Bow in. A love that conquers all things may well seek to conquer the stubbornness of our unbelief, by the might and marvels which reveal it to man. He who gave—that greatest of all miracles—his Son, as an offering for sin, may well attest his mission and his work by attaching to it the broad seal of his empire. Shall we refuse an inheritance by will, because of the strange device impressed upon its seal? Shall we refuse a kingdom, because its prince affords us the only proof of his authority to bestow the gift, which should satisfy us both of his willingness and ability? Rather, shall we not the more readily accept the proffered favor from the channel in which it flows, and the tokens by which it is accompanied

MIRACLES—THEIR NECESSITY AND DESIGN.

THAT Christianity was introduced and permanently established by miracles, is an admitted fact, by all who believe that Jesus of Nazareth was the true Messiah—the son of the living God. Those who deny the truth of his pretensions, and call in question his Divine commission and authority, deny this, and attempt to account for the origin and spread of the Gospel on other grounds. It is proper and just that they should be heard, and their theories candidly examined and considered. Christianity is either a false or a true system, and should be subjected to all the known and recognized tests that the nature of its claims justly demand. Its advocates and friends have never hesitated or been reluctant to hear all that may be urged against it, and candidly to consider the objections of unbelievers, whatever may be, their nature or character. They only ask that the law of evidence which should obtain in all questions of fact, shall be rigidly applied to it, and they are willing to abide the decision. They object, as of right, to the use and application of new and unwarrantable rules of evidence,

such as no competent tribunal would admit or entertain in the premises; but will hear and consider all that may be urged in opposition to its claims in harmony with the nature of the testimony on which it rests. Its friends set up no rules of evidence, but such as would be admitted in any court, competent to examine into questions of fact. They ask for no special commission, to inquire into the nature of its evidences. They seek for no extra-judicial proceedings to establish the truth of its pretensions. They are ready and willing to apply all the tests, and to examine all the reasonings which legitimately and of right belong to it, and are confident of the final results, in favor of its Divine origin.

Christianity lays no claims to be a system of ethical philosophy, the principles of which are discovered by the unassisted powers of the human mind, and which are liable to imperfection and error. This is a subject on which men may forever speculate, and in regard to which all may form an independent judgment, false or true. The reasonings on moral science call for the nicest distinctions in the use of words; and the least deviation from established rules, involves the whole subject in endless contradictions and dispute. Such, indeed, is the poverty of human language, that to the present time, no words can

be found sufficiently definite and precise to afford a permanent nomenclature, intelligible to all parties. Moral science, the precepts of which contemplate the proper understanding of all that is comprehended in the boundaries between right and wrong; the laws of emotion and sensibility, of pain and pleasure, of hatred and love, of desire and aversion, never have been satisfactorily adjusted, and the subject is still open for discussion, and will be in all future time.

Whilst Christianity contains in it a system of morals, to regulate the hearts and the lives of those who adopt it, and whilst its believers recognize in it the only true system known to man, and are willing to compare it with all other systems of human origin; they do not so much rely upon it as proof of the divine origin of the gospel, as they do to challenge the attention and respect of the world, to the clear embodiment of a system infinitely purer and larger than any that preceded it, and which has anticipated all that has followed its introduction into the world. That such a system of moral teaching should have originated with Jesus of Nazareth, and in such an age, and among such a people, they justly regard as a phenomenon unprecedented in the history of the world. It is known that the manners and morals of the Gentile world were

sunk in the lowest depths of corruption, and the wisest of their philosophers and sages apprehended the most terrible judgments on the race, without aid from on high. And the state of public morals in Judea was just as bad as among the more ignorant pagans; in addition to which the cherished pride and intolerance of the Jewish nation exceeded all others. The teachings of the Nazarene were continually arousing the prejudices of his own people, and in many respects were antagonistic to the prevailing spirit and manners which everywhere abounded. Besides, there was no part of the land in a more debased condition than that of Galilee, and no village in that land of darkness more corrupt than Nazareth, in which for thirty years he resided. His very name—the Nazarene, became a byword and reproach; and the question, familiarly known as a proverb—"Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" met with its answer in the person of Jesus, the best man that ever lived, and in the system of morality, the best that ever was taught. Not only then has a good thing come out of this degraded and polluted village, but the best thing the world has ever seen. Jesus, the son of the carpenter—the son of Mary—the resident for thirty years in an obscure and debased village. untaught, unknown, inexperienced and unbe-

friended, has given the world a system of moral science that would have rendered Plato immortal, and placed Socrates among the gods. The world, for nearly two thousand years, has had but one teacher of morals, and will never have another;—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of an humble artisan, who received nothing from the age which gave him birth, or the world that rejected him, but who, like the sun, has illumined all ages, and poured the light of his divine morality on all classes and conditions of our race.

But, whilst we thus affirm our judgment in regard to the structure of the Christian system, so far as its morality is concerned, and believe that it affords *prima facie* evidence of a divine origin, yet, primarily, the miraculous proof first exhibited on the part of its author is the main pillar on which it rests, and by which its truth must be sustained and defended. The august temple of argument in behalf of the divinity of the gospel, rests upon a supernatural basis, and must either stand or fall, according to the strength or the feebleness with which its foundation, as thus considered, can be demonstrated. This is the highest ground that can be assumed in the premises, and is all that its ablest adversaries may ask. A thousand minor questions doubtless

may be taken into the account in the discussion of the great subject of Christian evidence, and it is proper and right for the Christian to claim ail that legitimately belongs to him, for his labor is affirmative. He assumes the ground that Christianity is a question of fact, and everything that bears upon it he is at liberty to hear, and should not ignore any branch of the argument. But to narrow down the points at issue, we are willing to take the ground that Christianity originated in miracles, and therefore is divine. So Jesus reasoned, "If I do not the works of God, don't believe me:" and so Paul affirmed, "If Christ be not risen, then is your faith vain, and you are yet in your sins, and the apostles are false witnesses."

We suppose that this is the fairest, fullest issue that can be made. Upon it turns the truth or falsity of the Christian system. It was here the first battle was fought and the first victories achieved, and here we are ready and willing to meet the question now and in all coming time.

We are aware that infidelity begins with a negation. Its highest province is to deny; and this any one can do. It states with Hume, that a miracle is impossible. That the fact of a miracle, requires greater evidence for its demonstration than the senses even of him who has

witnessed it. No sophism can be more absurd than this. The hidden agency by which a sick man is instantly restored to health, a blind man to sight, and a dumb man to speech, or a dead man to life, may not and is not cognizable by the senses, but the phenomena are. The man who was sick, or blind, or deaf, or dead, is an object of sense, and the conditions of sickness, and disability, and death are all subjects which come under the purview of the senses, and the instantaneous changes wrought upon the person or persons in these several conditions, are alike the proper objects of sense; and therefore human testimony is as safe to be trusted here, as in any of the ordinary and natural events of life.

We know as little of the secret virtue of medicine to restore the sick, or the hidden virtue of food to sustain the life, or the tremendous forces of nature to evolve and mature the growth of the vegetable and animal kingdoms; but the facts themselves are all cognizable by the senses. And we might as reasonably deny the one as the other. The results of the supernatural are all natural. The effect of the miraculous in the cases referred to are all human. The man was sick—but instantly is made well. The blind is restored to sight, the dumb speak, the dead are brought to life. These latter are but the normal

conditions of the persons spoken of. Let it then be remembered that whilst the hidden and mysterious powers which wrought these wonders were concealed from the sight, the effects were visible, and as much the subject of human testimony as any facts of an ordinary character which address our outward senses.

The foundation of Christianity is not a mystery merely, but a mystery revealed. Not an infinite and invisible Agency, unappreciable by the senses, but the "Incarinate Word which dwelt among us, whose glory," in all the signs and wonders he wrought, "we have beheld, the glory of the only begotten of the Father—full of grace and truth."

Christianity is not a theory—a philosophical system, a Jewish fable; but an incomparable and glorious fact—mysterious in the power which gave it birth and rendered it credible, but having a human side upon it which brings it perfectly within the field of earthly vision. Its divine and supernatural accompaniments were alike demanded, as a scheme of moral providence, to prepare the mind for its reception, and to separate it from all the gross and debasing mythologies of the pagan world and the false and corrupt systems of the race. Its very structure, in harmony with its solemn purposes and lofty

aims, required a demonstration which would silence all objections, and command the intelligent belief of its heavenly origin. Without this, it would only have compared with the prevailing systems of the world as a moral science; and though it might and would have carried away all preference and silenced all competition, it would have failed in the first instance to have met with a ready introduction and a permanent establishment on the earth. So far then as miracles are concerned, they are in harmony with the religion they were designed to demonstrate. They were natural and necessary, instead of being strange and anomalous. They were the silver lining of the cloud of mercy, which revealed to the eye the sun that was behind it. They were the fit accompaniments of a person whose abode was heaven. The proper sign-manual and seals of Heaven's only ambassador on earth. And as in human governments, so in the divine, the ruling sovereign may be at liberty to choose his own way of attesting the claims of the highest functionaries sent to foreign powers. "What sign showest thou, that we may believe?" was both the dictate of reason and of custom. "If I do not the works of God, believe me not,-" was the only reply demanded in the case. These, said the Teacher from Heaven, these are my ere-

dentials. These are the proofs of my high commission, the seals of my authority.

The miracles of Jesus were not mere miracles of power. They were not divine acts only, but divine attestations,—and still farther, they were the mysterious symbols, the written lessons of the incarnate God, speaking in wisdom and mercy, and love to man.

Infidels have said, as though there was any soundness in the reasoning, "Admit that Jesus fed five thousand persons on one occasion miraculously, with a few loaves and fishes; but God every day supplies the wants of innumerable myriads. Jesus is said to have given eyesight to the blind, and even life to the dead; but sensation and vitality are the daily gifts of God to the world, in cases beyond reckoning. Which is the greater wonder? and what wisdom can there be in placing a lesser miracle before those who will not be moved by the greater miracle?"

But in reply we say, that it is not a question, whether more of God is seen in the ordinary operations of nature, or the occasional intervention as exhibited in a miracle. The one is simply equal to the other, but differing in the degree. The true question is, whether men will be more sensibly impressed by a sudden and immediate display of Omnipotence as seen in a miracle,

than by the ordinary operation of those laws with which we are familiar. If we had been present when God said "Let there be light, and light was;" and when he spoke all things out of nothing, would not the impression of his presence and his agency have been deeper than at any subsequent period, when we saw the sun rise according to his fixed and unalterable purpose, or looked upon the varied and successive processes which daily appear before us in the system of the universe, to which he has given birth.

Take, for example, the developments of the modern system of Spiritualism. We affirm nothing in regard to the pretensions of this system, but admitting, for the sake of argument, all that its advocates claim, why is it now that Robert Owen, the great champion of infidelity, and the no less deluded skeptic of our own city, Professor R. Hare, are both believers in a spiritual world, in the separate existence of spirits, and of the immortality of the soul? A spiritual universe existed before they believed in it, and souls were an entity and immortal, in despite of their former unbelief. But why believe it now? simply because special and sensible evidence has been furnished them. The spirits so long silent have spoken, and startled them from their slumbers; a single rap underneath a table, a tip of

an oaken board, a sound like the click of a watch, or an instrument moved by no law hitherto known, pointing to the alphabet, have upset all their unbelief, and Converted them to the faith they once despised and rejected. Is it not the unexpectedness of these strange visitations—the preternatural appearance of these "familiar spirits," that "peep and mutter," that have brought the unlooked for change? And now these men can deny the force of evidence and the necessity for the miracles of Christ, designed as they were to demonstrate the truth of a spiritual system, and to attest the claims of him who is Lord of that system. Strange inconsistency! Why did not the laws of nature, the powers of the human soul, its heavenward aspirations, its conscience, memory, hopes, and fears,—why did not Plato convert them to the doctrine of man's immortality, and to the belief in another world of conscious being after death? They believe now, according to Straus and other infidels, on the lesser evidence that nature in its ordinary operations afforded them.

The concessions of spiritualism for the necessity of such direct and sensible proofs of the separate and conscious existence of immortal spirits, is an argument in favor of the necessity for miracles to attest the incomparably higher

claims of Christianity upon the attention of man. And if anomalous spirits, good and bad, real or imaginary, can command the belief of these hoary skeptics in a spiritual system, surely the healing of the sick, the giving eyesight to the blind, and feet to the lame, and life to the dead—the calling back "the spirits" to reanimate the once lifeless corpse—the expelling legions of "demons" from those who, like them, are possessed of them; these and similar exhibitions of divine power, are more in harmony with the nature of the author of this system, and the system itself, than the old, stale, jejune, madcap sorceries either of ancient or modern times.

Among all the phenomena, pretended or real, yet seen or reported, none of them are beyond the power or the agency of some conditions of created intelligences. They are earthly, animal, or demoniac. They reach no higher stand-point than may be predicated of "spirits"—angelic or human. They never can be dignified by the name of miracle. They may be extraordinary and uncommon, but they are neither preternatural nor supernatural. They never can be called divine. They are as far beneath the "signs and wonders" performed by Jesus of Nazareth, as Hades is below Heaven, as the creature is below the Creator, as the spirits of the dead are below

the Spirit of the living God. "Can a demon give sight to the blind?"

These men are mad with rage because of the skepticism of the world in regard to the records they have given of these special visitations from the spirit-world,—they wonder at the ignorant unbelief and strange perversity of mind, which fails to receive their statements as credible, and yet they close their eyes, and harden their hearts, and refuse belief, amidst all the array of evidence from prophecy and miracle which attest the truth of Messiah's claims, as recorded in the writings of those who testified to what they saw and heard and handled of the living word, and sealed their testimony with their blood: after having wrought similar miracles with their Lord, during their own personal ministry.

But it may be objected, that, to unbelievers, spiritualists can now show the sensible proofs of spirit-existence, and invite them to come and see for themselves and be convinced. Well, so could the apostles, and so they did, to vindicate the truth of Christianity.

But it is again objected, these miracles of the Apostles have ceased, and now are matters of history. Well, so may the marvels of spiritualism cease, and in a few years may become also matters of history, as in ages past. But if real

now, the record of them, if faithful to the facts in the case, will remain so, in all future time, and will be as credible as the demonstrations are to eyewitnesses; for testimony, on record, is just as true as testimony of an eyewitness, if true at all.

But again, it is urged, why did not the miracles continue down to our own age, and afford us the same opportunity for believing that the cotemporaries of Christ and the Apostles had? We reply, why did not the primal creations of God continue through all successive ages? And why did they cease after the system of nature was completed? Why not make a new sun every morning, and a new moon every night? Why not make every man by an act of creation out of the dust of the earth, and every woman out of the side and rib of her chosen husband? Besides, if nature is not sufficient to reveal to us its Maker; if the ordinary operations of the law's of matter and of mind fail to teach man the fact of a spiritual system, but "spirits" must come, especially now, from the invisible world, to make known the facts; why object to the speciality of miracles? How much better would the world be or have been, if the supernatural in religion had become the natural, or the extraordinary should become as common as seed-

time and harvest, day and night, summer and winter?

If miracles should become the rule and the ordinary laws of nature the exception, would not the mind accommodate itself to it, and in the course of ages believe that to be natural which was supernatural, and that to be miraculous which was only in accordance with the laws which God had originally ordained? God could have as easily made the world on this plan as to have given it the laws which now exist. But what better would it have been for the race? Would infidelity have yielded to the force of testimony then, more easily and readily than now? Would it not have been just as liable to objection as the present established laws which govern the physical system? Who is more persuaded of the truth of the existence of an all-wise Creator for the theory in astronomy, that the hand of the Deity is still at work in the distant parts of the universe, in the creation of new worlds, than in the belief that the universe was created in ages past by the Almighty power? And who would the sooner yield his prejudices, and believe in the mission of Christ, if a series of miracles had continued down to the present era, for two thousand years? And what virtue would there be in a faith which resulted from

necessity rather than choice, from force rather than testimony, from sense rather than intelligence? "Because you see me, you believe!" said Jesus, to the doubting Thomas; "happy they, who having never seen, nevertheless believe."

The recorded testimony of the miracles which attested the truth of the Messiah's mission, and our reliance upon that testimony for all our confidence in the truth of his pretensions, is perfectly analogous with the system of nature, and our belief in him who created and still governs and controls it.

It was by a direct exhibition of God's power; it was an act or a series of acts of Omnipotence, that brought into existence the heavens and the earth and all that they contain. But since these acts were completed, the universe has moved on in accordance with the laws which he originally ordained. His hand has never, in nature, and for her, been again put forth; nor has his omnific voice been heard sending forth into space other worlds, as new and additional appendages of this established system. He spoke—He spoke once, and it was done, and the heavens and the earth not only were created, but remain. So, in the introduction of the Gospel, and so also in the Law on Mount Sinai, he made bare his arm—He visibly displayed his power,

and when they were firmly established, miracles ceased, because they were not needed. And as the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork; so, Christianity bears alike all the evidences of a divine system, and equally with nature challenges our belief and commands our reverence and homage for its Author.

THE INTRODUCTION OF CHRISTIANITY.

THAT Christianity was established permanently on the earth, and was rapidly propagated throughout the Roman world, are facts fully attested by history, sacred and profane. We will show the reasons for it, and from these deduce an argument for its truth and divinity. We ask an impartial consideration of the facts we shall offer, and the conclusions to which they naturally lead.

How it was possible to introduce such a religion, even among the Jews, is indeed a wonder and a marvel, except upon the admission of its supernatural origin and evidence. The structure and genius, the letter and spirit of Christianity, in all respects, differ from the Mosaic Institutions; and chiefly do they stand opposed to the manners, customs, and religious usages which prevailed in the times of the Messiah. No system of religion, however pure and excellent, unattended by supernatural evidence, could have been received by them or produced the effect ascribed to it under the ministry of Christ and his Apostles. No propositions, however clearly

stated, no force of reasoning, however logical and true, could have broken down the cherished prejudices of such a people, and have produced the results ascribed to it, without the aid of those supernal powers which attended its announcement. The Jews boasted of a noble ancestry; they had Abraham for their father; they were in possession of a politico-religious institution which began in miracle at Mount Sinai, and was heralded by the signs and wonders in Egypt, the redemption from the house of bondage, the crossing of the Red Sea, and all the cherished remembrances connected with these sublime events. They had a long list of prophets and kings, whose productions were unrivaled, and whose deeds had been the wonder of the world. "To them pertained the glory and the covenants, the giving of the law and the promises; of whom were the fathers, and from whom the Messiah was to descend, who is God over all blessed forever." No nation ever had such an ancestry; none such monuments of their greatness; none so fond of home and country; none so patriotic and proud; and none have ever held to their religion through all the changes which have passed over them, for more than three thousand years, as the Jewish nation. They stand now, the wonder of the world—the pillar of cloud, still pass-

ing silently along the desert, illumined by the light which gleamed from Sinai, and rendered glorious by the prophetic fires lit by their heaven-inspired prophets. This nation is the mythic Salathiel, living through all the ages of the past, surviving the great monarchies which lay across its pathway, and trampled them in the dust, but from which they have arisen a mighty army, as in the vision of Ezekiel, in the valley of dry bones. Now, that such a nation as this should have, for a moment, listened to a teacher like Jesus of Nazareth, and been impressed with the truth and grandeur of his mission, apart from the sensible proofs of his divine commission, is incredible. That his mission should have commenced and ended among his countrymen, "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," evinces the sincerity and honesty of his convictions, the boldness and courage with which he publicly maintained them, and the desire of affording them the opportunity of embracing the doctrine which he taught, or of openly and publicly refuting it. He did nothing in secret. He taught publicly in their synagogues and temples. He visited their towns and cities, and opened the seals of his commission, and taught them the doctrine of his approaching reign. Like all ambassadors, sent to foreign climes,

he not only presented his letters of authority, signed and sealed in the wonders which he wrought, and to which he appealed; but he never transcended the territorial limits of the nation to which he was sent. He was a minister of the circumcision. Though his religion was for the world, he was not in person sent but to the Jews. They alone of all the nations had the original writings of Moses and the Prophets in their hands, which had predicted his coming; and were the only competent people to examine into the nature of his claims as a divine messenger. That they admitted his works and acknowledged his miracles are matters of history. And that they rejected him and put him to death without reason and against all the rules of justice and right, are equally certain; and that these events in all their minutiae are in fulfillment of the prophecies held in their hands, no one can deny. And that his own predictions respecting not only his resurrection and triumph, but the fortunes of the ungodly race which crucified him, have been faithfully and fully accomplished, we as confidently affirm. They stand interwoven with the history of the world for nearly two thousand years—the annihilation of which would send us back into the barbarism of the pagans, and blot out the records of twenty

centuries. Surely infidelity has a most difficult task! We know not which most to be shocked at, its ignorance or its impiety—its blindness or infatuation. It has had the courage to present to us the difficulties of our faith in the Christian system, and we have thankfully received, and fully met them in the pulpit and by the press. Let them look at the difficulties of Infidelity, and be abashed and forever silenced. We confess our pity—our indignation, if not our scorn—for the banded groups of ignorant, unlettered boys, of vain, self-conceited, and arrogant pretenders, old or young—of woman's rights men! of socialists and spiritualists, of free-love sensualists, and of all who have made a covenant with death and hades, to oppose and abuse, to vilify and reproach all that is sacred in the faith of a nation, all that is sublime and triumphant in the hopes of the world. That men whom Job would not have set with "the dogs of his Hock—who cut mallows by the bushes, and juniper roots for their meat"—that such men should deride the faith of apostles and prophets, the faith of Newton and of Locke, the faith of Webster and of Clay, the faith of the civilized world, and the faith that wrought its civilization and preserves it, is treason against humanity, and rebellion, both against reason, as

well as religion. Such are the men who invite us to hear their stale and thousand times repeated "old wives' fables," against the truth of Christianity. Such are the men who insult our faith by their pictorial representations of what we deem sacred and holy, but which they would profane and render contemptible, by their ungodly ribaldry. Such are the men who publicly celebrate the birth-day of the debased, the drunken, the loathsome defamer of the Old and New Testaments; men who ought, for the same reason, celebrate the birth-day of Herod, who slew "the Innocents;" of Nero, who burnt the Christians, and of Diocletian, who persecuted them to the death. Men, who if they knew the day of the first apostasy of him who is called "*Ho Satanas*," would gladly celebrate it with all due honors, and hold it ever afterward as the brightest and best of all the calendar.

But we proceed with our argument. Christianity was true, and will be true, apart from all the extraordinary appendages by which it was attended; just as any other system founded on the eternal principles of righteousness is true, independent of the evidence which may render it credible. But as the human mind will not accept of facts without testimony, nor propositions without argument; so the teachings of Christ,

and the claims of his person as the Son of God would not have been received in the absence of those signs and wonders which confirmed his mission. What we affirm in regard to the truth of Christianity, independent of these divine attestations, is also true in regard to all the events of history, ancient and modern; and of the principles of astronomy and chemistry, and of the exact sciences. That Brutus killed Julius Caesar, and that Augustus was Emperor of Rome; that the sun is the centre of the solar system, and the earth performs its diurnal and annual revolutions; that the diamond is but refined charcoal, and that the angles in a triangle are equal to two right angles; and that things equal to the same thing are equal to one another, are all true, independent of all testimony, and of all reasoning and demonstration. But to give them credibility and currency, these are needed. So in the introduction of a religion intended to displace and forever abolish all others, it was demanded that the evidences for its truth should not only correspond with its divinity, but be both sensible and unexceptionable. And such, indeed, has been the fact in regard to Christianity.

The very conception of such a logical basis for Christianity to rest upon, evinces the wisdom and foresight of its Author, and should not only

shield Idm from contempt, but render him an object of reverence and homage to mankind. If Lord Bacon has won the proud eminence of being the prince of philosophers for his system of induction, to be applied to all questions within the bounds of human knowledge or research—Jesus of Nazareth first applied the principles which the philosopher taught, in the great induction he has offered to the world, in behalf of his divinity. If the one is the Prince of Philosophers, the other is "the witness for the truth," and "the Prince of Life."

We are aware that many arrive at the conviction of the truth of Christianity from its internal evidence; from the purity of its principle, the excellency of its precepts, the beauty and harmony of its morality, and the stainless, perfect life of its Author. To such, the structure of the system affords as strong evidences of its divine origin, as if now personally attended by "signs and wonders" from on high. But it must be confessed that these persons are exceptions to the general rule, and are only to be found among those, who have not only leisure and taste, but all necessary qualifications for its proper examination. Lord Bacon dedicated his great work to posterity, believing that the age in which he lived was incompetent to appreciate its princi-

ples and yield a hearty assent to their truth. He did not err in his judgment in regard to the verdict. It has been rendered, and he stands redeemed from the charge of wantonness and pedantry, which an ignorant and prejudiced age pronounced upon him. Jesus of Nazareth dedicated his work to all coming time, and the award is certain and eternal.

The works of John Milton and John Bunyan had no fit audience in the times which gave them birth; but they have inherited the fame which was due them, and will hold it in all coming time. Now the principles of the Baconian system were as true in the age in which they originated, as they are now; and the works of Milton and Bunyan were just as worthy of praise then as now; but superior intelligence, and a more careful inquiry into their nature, have furnished the "internal evidences" of their worth. Had these works been heralded by miracles, (though as mere human productions they were not worthy of such attestations), they might have summoned immediate attention to them, but they would have added nothing to the truth of their principles, or the unmistakable proofs of genius they possess.

Christianity is in the world. It is the religion of the only enlightened and best portions of the

world. It is daily increasing in the number of its friends, and exhibits no signs of weakness or infirmity. It has anticipated the verdict of posterity, and its eternal principles of truth are prophetic of its final triumphs. Like the sun going forth from his chambers, it rejoices in the greatness of its strength, and feels no weariness or exhaustion, for the labor of centuries. Not only is Christianity in the world, but it has been in it for five hundred, a thousand, for nearly two thousand years. It originated in the days of Augustus Caesar, and has seen his mighty empire totter and fall. It has looked down upon all the changes of earth, the rise and greatness, the decay and fall, of states and kingdoms, and the discovery of new worlds, during this long period, and it still remains. No discoveries in science, no records of antiquity, have disturbed its foundation. The heavens have been traversed, and the stars in their courses have been summoned to give testimony against it. The earth has been tortured, the hills have been tossed, and the craters of volcanoes have been examined, to yield up some evidences of its imposture. The seas have been crossed, and their depths been fathomed, to see if some proofs could not be afforded of the falsity of its pretensions. But in vain. Science and art say of her, "You are our

sister, our empress queen; and we bow down and give you homage. We are of the same family, but the inheritance is yours." Christianity is a matter of history, and its existence can be proved from the day of its birth down to the present era; not only from its own records, but from independent sources. How, then, did it originate, and what were the causes of its rapid spread in the early ages of its history? We affirm that its supernatural demonstrations can alone account either for its introduction or its spread. We are aware that skeptics object, that the miracles form a part of the records of the Christian religion; that they deny the authenticity of these records, and deem them unworthy of confidence. "You reason in a circle," say they; "the religion proves the truth of the miracles, and the miracles prove the truth of religion." We reply, that the religion may be true, independent of the miracles; and the miracles may have been real, independent of the religion; but the one was designed to give credibility to the other, and both are in perfect harmony with an institution claiming to have been from God. Its proposition and its proof belong to the same family, and have the same parentage. The problems of Euclid are not to be solved by avoirdupois weight, nor the facts of

history by an appeal to mathematics. The proposition and the proof must be consentaneous.

But we have never been able to see the force of the objections urged against the authenticity of the Books of the New Testament. They have arisen either from ignorance of the past, or from malice and presumption. For the same reasons that we receive the writings of Polybius, of Xenophon, of Caesar, Tacitus, and Quintus Curtius as genuine, because we have uninterrupted evidence of the past in their favor, so we receive the twenty-seven Books of the New Testament, written by their eight distinct authors, as the genuine works which bear their names. To reject these we must reject all others. Indeed the testimony in behalf of their genuineness is greater than that of any other known as standard classics. They were written by better men, by eye-witnesses of what they have reported. By those who extensively taught what they had also written. Their writings were addressed to large societies, and publicly read in widely different portions of the world. But these things cannot be affirmed of any of the writings of profane authors, to which we have referred. In addition to this, an uninterrupted succession of writers, from the days of the Apostles to the present time, have quoted from the records of

the Apostles, and made mention of them; so that if the Books of the New Testament were all destroyed, we could find all the essential facts and testimonies, commands and promises, found therein, in the writings of the first Christians and early Fathers of the Church. This cannot be said of any of the profane classics. We may with greater reason deny the authenticity of all other ancient books, than that of the New Testament. Indeed, all human and recorded testimony, for the same reason, should be discredited and condemned.

Infidelity is a base and wanton surrender of all that is sacred in truth, in fact, and in human testimony. It is an insult offered to our reason and judgment, and our faith in the common honesty of the best specimens of humanity. It is a wicked, ignorant, and presumptuous negation, without reason, and against all testimony. There is nothing in it that is robust and manly. Ostrich-like, it hides its head in the sand when hotly pursued, and deems its own blindness a security from all dangers and peril. It shuts its eyes on all the past, and reduces it to nothingness. It imprisons itself in impenetrable darkness, and says there is no light—no sun. Shame! shame on its miserable pretensions! Its advocates would

not set up an issue, in any court, where the value of a penny was concerned, on such grounds as they oppose the truth of Christianity. No advocate at the bar, however base, would hazard even an equivocal standing in sustaining such a plea; and no court would admit such denials, without sense and without reason, to be heard in its presence, but would dismiss the case, as an insult to the tribunal before which it was brought, and to the sacred principles of truth and justice.

REASONS ASSIGNED BY INFIDELS FOR ITS PROPAGATION.

THE early and rapid spread of the gospel, unbelievers have attempted to explain and account for, without an appeal to miracles, in any sense of the term; aware of the fact, that a concession in its favor, on this ground, would be fatal to their views, and a virtual admission of the truth of Christianity. For no one but God can work a miracle, and he would not do it in aid of an imposture, and only for grand and necessary purposes; and therefore the various attempts to set aside this branch of Christian evidence. But it comes up in every department of the argument; and upon the admission of supernatural agency alone, is it believed by us, that Christianity could have been introduced, much less have been rapidly propagated throughout the earth.

Many and serious were the difficulties it had to meet and overcome at its very threshold; and these were of so formidable a character, that they would have arrested its progress and killed it in its infancy, without the aid and appliances to which we refer. These we will briefly state.

First, the moral difficulties which everywhere existed. These obtained to as great an extent in Judea, as among the pagan nations. The abounding corruptions of the world then, as now, presented obstacles insurmountable in the way of the progress and triumph of Christianity, without such aid from on high as miracles afforded. We need not dwell upon the condition of public morals among the Jews; this will be found on every page of Josephus, in his Antiquities, and throughout the whole of the Old and New Testaments. We have but to refer you to these works, and to call attention to the subsequent history of the nation, to prove that a more wicked and corrupt people could not have been found on the earth. And all that may be said on this subject in regard to them, with still greater intensity may be affirmed with respect to the character and condition of the Gentile world. Paul, in his letter to the Romans, the first and second chapters, has given a faithful and graphic picture of the state of public morals, both among the Jews and also the Gentiles; and all contemporaneous history fully sustains his testimony.

The gospel had to meet this world-wide and abounding corruption, and stay it. It was like infancy contending with hosts in armor. Like

a ray of light in opposition to the darkness of the pit. Like an angel in single combat with the legionary armies of Satan. The first word that Christianity uttered was Repentance; not in its ordinary sense as now used, but sorrow for the past, ample restitution for all wrong doing, and perfect and absolute amendment of life for the future; not merely as seen in the outer man, but proceeding from the heart. The tree was to be made good that the fruit might be good. The fountain was to be purified that the streams issuing from it might become pure. It was a radical and thorough amendment of life. John the Baptist, Jesus, the Apostles—all commenced their ministry with this appeal thundering in the ears of men; and no progress could be made in the objects of their mission without this indispensable qualification.

Thus to eradicate all that was evil in the heart of man, to crucify the passions and desires of the corrupt heart, and to reform the life, were its first and constant demand. Its opposition to the spirit and the manners of the world, rendered it a most offensive and impertinent message, and aroused all the latent hostility in the heart, and the open and popular forms of wickedness which then existed. And how could it have succeeded, in the absence of those overwhelming testimonies

to which its success is justly ascribed? Pride and unholy ambition, the praise of men, lust and avarice, blind attachment to state religions, fostering and cherishing all the base and irregular passions of the human heart, hoary superstition, incorporated with the state, and rendered sacred and inviolate by age and prescription, arrayed themselves against it. Vain would have been all attempts to have achieved a triumph with such a combined and prevailing system of abominations to meet and overcome, in the absence of the supernatural appendages which Christianity summoned to its aid.

Secondly. The intellectual difficulties it had to meet. It was the age of refinement. The arts were in a high state of perfection. Science had won some of its proudest trophies. Oratory and philosophy, poetry and painting, in Greece and in Rome, were all cultivated. It was the "Augustan Age," the proudest then known in the history of the world. Judea had its teachers of great renown, and numerous leaders of all the prevailing sects. It has its learned Rabbis, and its respective schools. Greece still maintained its superiority over the world; her arts of peace and her schools, gave her the ascendancy. Athens was still in her glory, the seat of literature, the home of poets and philosophers,

the stronghold of idolatry. Her court of Areopagus, the legal acquirements of her judges, and the eloquence of her orators, were proverbial. The distinguished men of Rome still resorted to her schools; and as far as human aid could go, civilization and learning had attained its highest elevation. And yet, in the lands of "Euclid, of Aristotle, and Longinus; of Demosthenes, Solon and Lycurgus; of Homer and Pindar; of Terrence and Varro, Atticus and Cicero, Sallust and Livy, Horace, Ovid, and Virgil," the Apostles not only preached, but made innumerable converts, and established churches which for ages existed, and the remnants of which still continue.

Thus it had to make way, not feebly but powerfully—not by degrees, but immediately—against the moral and intellectual obstacles which opposed its progress. The rulers of the Jews the power of their priests and the decrees of their councils, and the hostility of the nation, on the one hand, could not check it; nor the ignorance, corruption, idolatry, and persecution of the rulers and people in the Gentile world, nor the eloquence and authority of its philosophers arrest its progress.

Either the Apostles must have been superior in intellect and authority to the world around

them; their learning and eloquence must have greatly surpassed every thing then or hitherto known; they must have offered extraordinary bribes to tempt and to fascinate the people, as demagogues seeking for popularity and power; they must have tampered with the prejudices and passions of the people, offering them means and inducements for self-gratification and lust; or they must have been attended in their triumphant march by a system of agency wholly divine. They must have preached "with the Holy Spirit sent down from Heaven."

The five causes assigned by Gibbon for the rapid propagation of Christianity will not account for it, as have been fully shown by the advocates of Christianity. They are these:—

The inflexible and intolerant zeal of the first Christians.

The doctrine of a future life.

The miraculous powers ascribed to the primitive churches.

The pure and austere morals of the first Christians.

The union and discipline of the Christian Church, —" or Republic."

These are the secondary causes assigned by Gibbon, one of the most insidious foes of Chris-

tianity, for its rapid spread throughout the Roman empire, in the first ages of its history.

On the first we would ask, How was it possible for "intolerant zeal" to spread a religion which awakened such deadly opposition to it? Their "inflexible" courage might unite the hearts of the Christians together; but a zeal without knowledge, could hardly have prevailed over the settled convictions and habits of ages. But the intolerance lay on the side of their persecutors; and this had more power to check and to restrain, than "the intolerant zeal" of Christians had to conquer and subdue. That they had both courage and zeal no one can deny, but both proceeded from the excellency of the cause they advocated, and their confidence in the divine origin of Christianity.

On the second, we would add: That the doctrine of a future life was not so generally believed by the pagan world, as shown by Watson and others; and one entire sect of the Jews, the Sadducees, repudiated almost every thing that enters into our conceptions of that state, denying the existence of angels and spirits, and the doctrine of the resurrection. Besides, the Apostles insisted upon the resurrections of the body as the means of its enjoyment—a doctrine alike offensive to the Sadducees on the one hand, and the phi-

losophers on the other. And what influence could this doctrine have on the minds of those who were living in ease and voluptuousness, and who could not be induced to forego the pleasures of the present life for any speculations in regard to the future, however true they might be. Nothing but absolute demonstration of the fact of a future life could have availed with them.

The third cause assigned by him was, "the miraculous powers *ascribed* to the primitive church." This, if properly stated, we should have no objections to. It was not the miraculous powers "ascribed," but actually possessed, not by the primitive but the apostolic church, and chiefly by the miraculous powers possessed by the Apostles, to which were owing the spread of the gospel. This, the first opposers of the faith admitted, whilst they ascribed the power by which it was done to magic, or attempted to lessen their importance.

Julian the Apostate said, that "Jesus did nothing wonderful, unless any should esteem that, to have healed some lame and blind, and exorcised some demoniacs, in villages like Bethsaida and Bethany, were very wonderful works!" Now Julian must have known from the same source that he learned the above facts, that Jesus not only healed "some lame and blind, and ex-

orcised demoniacs" in obscure villages, but that he cleansed the leper, gave sight to the blind and life to the dead, and that too in all Judea and Galilee, by the seaside, in open fields, in large cities, and that also in innumerable instances.

Mere pretense would have only subjected the Apostles to contempt, and their cause to shame and infamy. Besides, the world was accustomed to the impositions practiced upon it by the pretended miracles of the gods and the priests, and these were now sunk in public estimation, and had lost their power. Whilst real miracles would have silenced prejudice and carried conviction to the mind, false ones would have awakened not only distrust, but downright opposition and disgust; and this especially toward those who presented Christianity to the world as the only true religion, and preached it for the purpose of displacing all others, by the superior might of its authority, the purity of its doctrine, and solemnity of its sanctions. The pretended wonders of paganism might well be borne with, inasmuch as each god could live on equal terms with all the rest, and each system of idolatry could both tolerate and admit the claims of all others. But a religion which proclaimed a war upon all the prevailing systems of the day, Jewish and

pagan, and which sought their annihilation, in the absence of miracles could not have been received with favor.

From the detected character of popish "signs and wonders," which bear so strong a resemblance to those of Jewish and pagan miracles, we may conclude it probable that they were impostures and lying wonders, but artfully contrived by the more skillful to mislead the ignorant mass, prepared for delusion by that gross superstition and belief in magic which prevailed among them. Simon Magus bewitched the people with his "sorceries;" and Josephus calls the false prophets who appeared at this time among the Jews, *magon* and *goetes*,—"magicians and sorcerers."

"As to amulets, charms, sorceries and enchantments, the Jews of that age were notoriously credulous; and as incredulous to the real miracles of our Lord and his Apostles."

"The truth of these miracles obtains from this a stronger evidence, and the unbelief of the Jews, a MORAL solution. By a credulous people, they must have been admitted as demonstrative of the doctrine in confirmation of which they were wrought; but they hated the doctrine itself, and their passion overpowered every mental habit, and changed, as to those glorious evidences of

pure and holy truth, the whole character of their minds; nor is this without a parallel. The credulity of infidelity in our own age has often been remarked; and it is exemplified in the readiness with which both those entirely reject the Holy Scriptures, and the critics who would explain away their supernatural character, admit the most absurd theories in opposition to them, and the deceived confidence with which they teach them to others."

The Jews and pagans could not deny the reality of the miracles of Christ and the Apostles. The former, however, from false principles of interpretation of scripture, concerning the Messiah, rejected the miracles, and demanded instead of them a "sign from heaven;" perhaps in allusion to the prophecies of Daniel, in which he speaks of the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, and being brought before the Ancient of Days, and that there was then given to him glory, dominion, and a kingdom, that all nations, kindreds and people should obey him.

It is more than probable that a false application of this and other ancient predictions, with reference to the second advent of the Messiah, applied by them to his first, was the chief occasion of their refusal to admit the authority of

the ordinary miracles, as wrought by Jesus of Nazareth. It was even after he had performed some of his mightiest works, and given the most satisfactory evidences of his Messiahship, that this "adulterous and sinful generation" sought for "a sign from heaven." Indeed, the miracles performed by the Saviour, was the ground on which they demanded this sign. It is not then to be wondered at, that the Jews should have rejected the authority of the miracles, to have proven Jesus to have been the Messiah, inasmuch as there was one wanting—"the sign from heaven," which would in their judgment have silenced all objections! But this was never promised; it would have falsified the whole of the prophetic scriptures, that spoke of the sufferings of the Messiah, and would have broken the chain of evidence, which proved him to have been the "coming one" of their nation, who was to be in their estimation "a worm and no man," "a reproach of men and despised of the people," whom the nation should "laugh to scorn," "shoot out the lip" and "shake the head," saying—"He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him, seeing he delighted in him."

Only one thing which bore any resemblance to a "sign from heaven," did Jesus promise to the Jews, and that was his resurrection. This

was effected by the direct interposition of the Father in heaven, upon the lifeless body of the Nazarene—Jesus. In it there was no agency, visible and cognizable, of the Messiah, as in the miracles he wrought in person. But although the power which raised up our Lord Jesus from the dead was from heaven, the visible "sign" was rather from the earth than the heavens! They looked for a sign from heaven,—Jesus would furnish them one from the earth! But in so doing, whilst it would better accord with the humility which he assumed as the son of Mary, and the Word that was made flesh, would form an unanswerable proof in all coming ages of his Messiahship. He was demonstrated to be the Son of God with power by his resurrection from the dead.

Nothing but the superior evidences and sensible demonstrations of the Christian religion could have availed in its establishment and progress. The very existence of all these counterfeit and pretended miracles on the part of paganism, show the necessity for just such an array of evidence as the Christian religion gave. These pretended miracles afford a concession in its favor, and prove incontestably that a religion proceeding from God must be accompanied by supernatural proofs of the most unquestionable

character. It was the superior power of the God of the Hebrews, which proved him to have been the true God, in opposition to the gods of the nations. And so, the superior proofs of miraculous agency possessed by the Apostles, showed them to have acted under a commission from on high, and that the religion which they taught was worthy of all acceptance.

It was not then the miracles "*ascribed*" to the Apostles, but those really performed by them, that gave credibility to the doctrine they taught; and therefore the imputation is not only unworthy of those who have made it, but wholly inadequate to account for the prevalence of the Gospel in early times. If the miracles are rejected, then history is but a fable; and effects of the most extraordinary character have been produced without any adequate causes.

But the fourth reason—namely, the pure and austere morals of the first Christians—is indeed quite a singular one. Whence did these Jews and pagans, who first embraced Christianity, derive their pure morals? The very fact that they possessed these extraordinary virtues when the world was sunk in the depths of corruption, show the superior evidence of that faith which wrought such effects upon them and produced such fruits. And how could these produce such

results on others, who stood rebuked by the lives of Christians? Would it not rather have provoked contempt and persecution, and were not these the legitimate effects on the world, as witnessed in the early ages of Christianity? Whilst no greater compliment could have been passed upon the lives of the first Christians than what is found in this proposition, it evidently could not be an assignable cause of the rapid spread of the Gospel. Talent and genius may soon dazzle and attract; but goodness and truth, humanity and benevolence, are slow to win favor or to court admiration. And therefore this secondary cause could not be justly regarded as one of the chief reasons for the success of the Gospel in the early ages of its propagation.

The last secondary cause, mentioned by Gibbon, is "the union and discipline of the Christian" church, or "Republic," as he is pleased to call it.

That Christians in the Apostolic age were united in a common faith, must be admitted; but this would rather provoke hostility, than win favor, to a new religion, which, not only was opposed to all others then existing, but which openly sought their destruction. But it should be remembered that there were many divisions, that early made their appearance among the first

Christians, to which the attention of the Apostles was directed, in their several Epistles, as may be seen by a reference to those seat to the church at Rome, at Corinth, and the churches of Galatia; and the rigid "discipline" to which reference is made, would rather deter those from joining them who were disposed to retain their vicious habits, and who would be unwilling to submit to the wholesome and reformatory restraints of the Gospel of Christ.

It was only after Christianity had overrun the empire, and won its first and noblest triumph, and the days of miracles had ceased, and the ancient purity of the Christian profession had degenerated, that any thing like a "republic" supported by the state, came into existence. This happened three hundred years after the date of the first events occurred on the day of Pentecost, which celebrated the coronation of the Prince and Saviour of the world, and won to his cause, three thousand subjects, by the ministry of the Apostles; when the church assumed the form of a "republic," and obtained the empire, it had lost its original form, and hereafter must be regarded as the apostasy—" the 'man of sin,'"—" the son of perdition," spoken of by the Apostles, in their several letters. But before the unhallowed union of church and state, the Gospel had over-

run the Roman world, and by the power of its truth, and the force of its testimonies, had placed itself, not only in the hearts of millions, but on the throne of the Caesars.

In this argument, it will be necessary for the reader to distinguish between the primitive and the apostolic church. Ecclesiastic historians are not always safe guides on this subject; as they are too apt to be dazzled by the splendor of the apostate, rather than by the simple and unadorned appearance of the apostolic church. This has been a fruitful source of error and confusion in the consideration of this subject.

Christianity won its first and noblest triumphs before it was received into favor by the state. It made its way, by the force of its mighty testimonies, into "Caesar's household," without asking any favor from the emperor, or receiving any from the empire. And if it placed itself upon the throne, it did so by the strength of its superior demonstrations, and the might of its divine authority. But what it gained from the state, was at the loss of its secret power. And the greatest evil which befell the church, was the "help" which the state impertinently afforded her. It was the coil of the serpent around the family of Christ, which nearly crushed and fatally crippled it for ages, and from which it has not yet re-

covered. It was like the brawny hug of the bear, around the fragile and delicate form of a virgin, which killed while it caressed her. In vain may we look for the apostolic church, after she was wedded to the state; she lost her first and only lawful husband by this spiritual adultery. And henceforth, whatever may be the trappings by which she was adorned, and the splendid tiara she wore, she was shorn of all her ancient beauty and glory, and was henceforth despoiled and dishonored.

In the apostolic churches there was a unity of faith and a fellowship of spirit, which indicated that they belonged to one head, and were in fact one body. But in vain may we look within the first century of the Christian church, for any external form of confederation between distant towns and cities, states and kingdoms. The diocesan, metropolitan and patriarchal forms of organization belong to a much later period, and so of the episcopal.

Mosheim says, that "each individual church, which had a bishop or presbyter of its own, assumed to itself the form and rights of a little distinct republic or commonwealth; and with regard to its internal concerns, was wholly regulated by a code of laws, that if they did not originate with, had at least received the sanction

of the people constituting such church." This is said with respect to the earliest churches.

Neander also says, "In regard to the relations of the presbyters to the churches, they were appointed, not to exercise unlimited authority, but to act as the leaders and rulers of ecclesiastic republics; to transact any thing in connection with the church, not as lords of the same, but as servants."

The independence of the churches, one of another, is fully and clearly presented by Mosheim. "Although all the churches were, in this first age of Christianity, united together in one common bond of faith and love, and were in every respect ready to promote the interest and welfare of each other, by a reciprocal interchange of good offices, yet, with regard to government and internal economy, every individual church considered itself as an independent community; none of them ever looking beyond the circle of its own members for assistance, or recognizing any sort of external influence or authority." He adds, "It is not until the second century that any traces of that sort of association from whence councils took their origin, are to be perceived; when we find them occurring here and there, some of them tolerably clear and distinct, others again but slight and faint, which seems plainly to prove

that the practice arose subsequently to the times of the Apostles."

"Wherever religion has been established by law," says Robert Hall, "with splendid emoluments and dignities annexed to its profession, the clergy, who are candidates for these distinctions, will ever be prone to exalt the prerogative; not only to strengthen the arm on which they lean, but that they may the more successfully ingratiate themselves in the favor of the prince." He adds, "The boasted alliance between church and state, on which so many encomiums have been lavished, seems to have been little more than a compact between the priest and the magistrate, to betray the liberties of mankind, both civil and religious."

It was not owing to the organization of a mighty ecclesiastic Republic then, that Christianity achieved such triumphs; for such an organization was the growth of centuries; but its victories were all won in the first ages of its existence, before such confederations were seen or known.

The first oecumenical council, which arose out of the dispute between Alexander and Arius, by the order of Constantine, in A. D. 325, established a creed of human device, recognized the right of punishing heretics, gave a fuller development to

the man of sin, and established the kingdom of the clergy. From hence arose the "Republic," of which Gibbon and others speak.

It was at this time that Dupin remarks, that "Bishops met together with liberty, being supported by the princes, and made abundance of rules concerning the ordinances of the church. Previous to this the discipline was plain and simple, and the church had no other splendor to recommend it but what the holiness of the manners of the lives of the Christians gave it."

Jones, in his history remarks, that "the effects of this general council were to lay the foundation of a system of persecution, of a complexion altogether new; professing Christians tyrannizing over the consciences of each other, and inflicting tortures and cruelties far greater than they had sustained from their heathen persecutors."

In the argument we have instituted for the truth of Christianity, the reader will bear in mind the obvious distinction between the Apostolic church, and that order of things which subsequently gained dominion over the empire by a conformity to the spirit and customs of the world. We doubt not but that Infidelity would be shorn of more than half its boasted strength, if this distinction should be observed. It is not Chris-

tianity on the throne of the Caesars, but Christianity enthroned in the hearts of its faithful and devoted subjects, to which we refer. It is not the church in alliance with the state, and under the patronage of princes, to which we invite your attention, but the church in alliance with its only head the Messiah, and in its relationship to the heavens, from which its author and founder came, on which our argument rests. It is not the church in the second or third centuries, but the church as it was founded by the Apostles, built upon the Rock—Christ, and which had its beginning in the City of Jerusalem, on the day of Pentecost, immediately after the ascension of the Messiah, and which spread itself like the arms of the Ocean, until it embraced the world; it is to this church we invite attention, and on which our argument alone rests. We entreat the reader to keep this fact constantly before his mind, in the consideration of this great subject.

It was not even the church of the Old Testament, with its awful and glorious services; with its High Priest, seen by the worshipers in his emblazoned breast-plate—a church once spoken to in thunder and enveloped in thick darkness. It was not the symbolic institution of the Jews, having its seat in the earthly Jerusalem, but the true spiritual temple, built on the foundation

of Christ and the Apostles; embodying in itself the prediction of her prophets, the antitype of all its strange and pregnant hieroglyphics, and having for its head the anointed Lord, the "Root and the offspring of David"—the crowned monarch of the Universe.

THE CHURCH A WITNESS FOR THE TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY.

WE present the reader some additional evidence for the truth of Christianity arising out of its establishment, and early and rapid propagation. The subject is a large one, and deserves particular attention; but we shall only now offer a few facts in relation to that new organism—the church, as a witness for the truth of Christianity. We beg the reader to examine well that famous declaration, "Upon this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."*

Many works have been written on the subject of Christian Evidence, and those who are interested in its examination should avail themselves of all the light which a question of such importance demands. No one should think lightly of or cease his investigations until he has compassed the ground legitimately occupied by it, to enable him to form an independent judgment in regard to it.

*Matt. xvi. 18.

It is easy to find fault, still easier to deny; and where argument fails, to resort to sophistry and wit. But matters of fact, which have claimed the attention of the world for twenty centuries, and still holds it, demand the most grave and earnest consideration.

God has favored the world with three dispensations—the Patriarchal, the Jewish, and the Christian. The first was a family religion, and adapted to the infancy of the race; the second, was a national religion, and was given to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and the last is the religion of the world, and designed to be of perpetual obligation. Whilst the two former have passed away, the latter continues, and will continue to the end of time. It was given to man, in view of his spiritual necessities and wants, and in anticipation of all the laws of human progress and intellectual development, which should characterize the race. Neither the Patriarchal or the Jewish religions could have become universal. They were suited perfectly to the ages, and the people immediately interested in them; but they were wanting in those elements of popularity, which would give them free access to the human heart; and in those broad and expansive principles, which alone can vitalize the great masses of the people, and be alike

received and welcomed by the ignorant and the learned; affording light and testimony to satisfy all minds, and a reasonable and permanent basis for the faith and the hope of an alienated world to rest upon.

It is worthy of remark, that no false or corrupt forms of religion, ever have, or can become universal;—not even paganism itself. This assumes the protean shape of every country that comes under it; so that the gods of one country are not recognized by another; and the forms of their worship differ as widely as the objects of their religious homage. The gods of Egypt would be "strange gods" in Greece; and these equally as strange among the Druids of the ancient Britons; neither of them could displace the rest; and no form of paganism ever could become universal. This is equally true in regard to the religion of Mahomet, the false prophet. By force of arms, he and his followers endeavored to give it universality; but in this they failed; and now the crescent is not only in its wane, but its last horn will soon be extinguished, and that forever. It is doomed to destruction, as no earthly power can uphold or save it. A momentary respite has been afforded by the aid of the allied powers of Europe; but it will sink by the weight of its own corruption, or fall by its

own weakness, and will be merged in the stronger powers which now sustain or menace it.

And the same may with equal truth be said of the great western apostacy—the Papacy, which had its rise coeval with Mohammedanism, and whose history and fortunes in prophecy, if not blended together, at least stand side by side; and the destruction of the one, will be a certain pledge of the downfall of the other. This great despotism, combining the elements of paganism, Judaism, and all the corruptions of Christianity,—the growth of centuries;—during the darkest ages of the history of the church never was, and it never can be catholic or universal. It is the *Roman Catholic*,—not the world-wide catholic religion. It is the religion of the Pope, not the religion of Christ. The apostacy—not apostolicity. It is a local, not a universal religion. It seeks to obtain empire by the sword as well as by the voice—by forms which overpower the senses rather than by truth. But priests, even in their best estate, living in the contemplation of spiritual things, are not personally fitted for handling worldly matters; and preachers make the silliest and worst politicians of the state. And history shows, that while the ministry were poor and dependent on their nocks for support, the church was in her best spiritual condition; when

they became rich and powerful, their morals became corrupt, and their zeal and enthusiasm decayed.

The Messiah, during his personal mission, announced his intention of establishing permanently on the earth, an institution called The Church, which should survive all other organizations; and this was not only in fulfillment of his own predictions, but in accordance with the prophecies of the Old Testament.

We choose to select this special item, in order to avoid the ordinary method of approaching the subject of Christian evidence; not because it is the strongest ground that may be assumed, but that its novelty may arrest and summon your attention more directly to it.

You will please look at the difficulties Jesus of Nazareth had to encounter, in order to secure his designs, each of which he must meet and overcome, or his pretensions could not be sustained, and his mission prove a failure.

Jesus was obscure in his birth and parentage. He was without education or authority as a man. He was not while on earth a priest, being of the tribe of Judah, of which no mention is made of the priesthood. He was not a ruler or a prince. He had no use for the sword or the sceptre. He was poor and dependent. His followers were a

few women of Galilee and a small number of disciples chosen from the humblest ranks of life—chiefly publicans and sinners. His apostles for the most part were fishermen. With these he designed to form an organization that should last forever,—until the consummation of all things.

It will be remembered that when this design was announced by the Saviour, Jerusalem was still standing, the capital of the kingdom of the Jews. The temple, as the centre of the religious services of that nation, was then in existence, and the tribes of the Lord continually, day and night, waited upon its grand and imposing ritual. The morning and the evening sacrifices were daily made. The high priest and the inferior ministers of the sanctuary held undisputed influence and authority over the Jewish nation, as they had indeed for centuries presided over the services of a people, whose cherished hope and belief were that the nation and its religion would exist forever. Jealous of their honor; holding with the utmost tenacity to the religion of Moses and the tradition of their fathers, they never for a moment supposed that any other form of religion, or any institution, could rival their own, much less displace and abolish it. And yet in that very nation, in the capital of that kingdom, in the precincts of its temple, a new organism would

commence under the Messiah, that should not only succeed and triumph, but should see, according to the predictions of the Nazarene, Jerusalem sacked and burned; its splendid palaces and dwellings humbled in the dust, its walls in ruins, its temple demolished, and the nation spoiled and scattered, until the times of the Gentiles should be accomplished—a prophecy which not only has the witness of eighteen centuries past for its fulfillment; but which still, to this day, stands before us a monument of the truth of his mission who spake it.

It must also be remembered that serious and formidable difficulties, of a personal character, lay before him, which his own prescience saw, and his divine power and authority anticipated and overcome. He was first to die—not an ordinary death, not quietly on his couch, with friends around to comfort and sustain him; but to die by the hand of violence—to die as a public malefactor. Not according to the usages of his own nation; but to die by the act of crucifixion, by the "wicked hands" of the Gentiles,—by the authority of the Roman government. And this he predicted in the clearest terms and in the most express language. How simply ridiculous! How absurd and presumptuous! How contrary to all the hopes and calculations of men, for one to

found an empire on his own death; an empire, too, that depended on his life both to give it birth and to endow it with vitality and permanency. His death, to all appearance, would have been the certain ruin of all his prospects; and yet confident of success, he dies, and by means the most unlooked for, and events the most extraordinary, he achieves his noble and sublime purposes. He dies, but he rises from the dead. He ascends to the heavens. He takes the possession of the throne of the universe. He commissions his Galilean fishermen to proclaim the great facts of his death, and burial, and resurrection to the world. He promises by his Spirit to co-operate with them; and, as the Advocate of his cause, to grant them success in the enterprise with which they were entrusted. Now the success of his designs in the establishment of the new institution,—the church, depended upon the conditions of which we have spoken; and these conditions could never have been met and overcome, but by aid not only divine, but wholly beyond the reach of human wisdom and human agency to conceive, much less to have accomplished. Let it then be remembered that his death, his burial, his resurrection, his ascension, his coronation, and the bestowment of his Spirit, with all the splendid gifts accompanying his presence, were each and

all necessary to the attainment of his objects. Surely these were enough to have arrested the boldest adventurer; to have subdued the wildest spirit of ambition ever entertained; and to have rendered vain and nugatory the best laid plans of human device ever known. No dream of the enthusiast, no vagaries of the insane; not the wildest scheme of knight-errantry ever were so hopeless and unattainable as the designs of Jesus unless aided from on high. As soon would we expect the Delaware river to run up stream to its sources—the ocean to change its bed for the dry land—the cities of New York and Philadelphia in a day be depopulated, and the land converted into a desert; as soon see the sun rise in the west and set in the east, and the heavens and the earth perish at the bidding of a Mormon prophet,—as to expect that Jesus of Nazareth, without the supernatural powers he possessed, accomplish the purposes he designed with the difficulties which lay in his path. But he said to Peter, when he confessed him to be "the Christ—the son of the living God," "On this rock," the grand Oracle he had confessed, "On this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." He does not say on this rock have I built, but "on this rock will I build my church." The church

was not as yet built. The Christian temple had not been erected. Like another David, he was gathering the materials for it; but he must die, be raised again from the dead, and crowned Lord of all, before even the corner-stone should be laid, or the chief builders, according to rule, place the "spiritual stones" upon its walls. It was to be built upon the foundation of the prophets and the apostles, Jesus Christ being the chief corner-stone. Peter was merely one of the stones of this foundation. Jesus Christ was the chief corner. He was "the STONE which the Jewish builders," like the papal, have rejected, but which has become the head of the corner.

Few seem to know the grand designs of the Messiah in the establishment of the church, much less its true scriptural origin and principles. Not only is this so with regard to those who are outside of its sacred precincts, but also those who are members of it. It is called in scripture by many noble and endearing names, as the kingdom—the kingdom of heaven—Jerusalem from above—the temple of God—the body of Christ,—the bride—the Lamb's wife—the church of the living God. The word church indicates a class of people "called out" from the world,—a separate and distinct community. The word has been appropriated to the Jewish nation—called

out from Egypt, and separated from this and all other nations. Not that the Jewish nation was, in any sense of the term, the church of Christ. It was simply "the church in the wilderness," and the shadow of good things to come.

An Apostle has spoken of three grand divisions of the race: "the Jews, the Gentiles, and the church of God." The latter, namely, the church, is a third element, composed of men taken out of the two former. It is in the world but not of it. A kingdom among the kingdoms. As integral parts of the nations, Christians may be called Jews or Gentiles, and in the smaller divisions, barbarians, Scythians, bond and free, male and female; but in the organism called the Church, they are dwellers in Mount Zion—citizens of the kingdom, members of the body of Christ, stones in the spiritual temple;—the called, the faithful, the sanctified. These great formal distinctions are all recognized, and are not to be confounded one with the other in the New Testament.

The blending of church and state is a most unhallowed marriage. It is spiritual adultery, and one of the highest offenses known. No greater evidence can be given of an incurable apostasy than this. The Church of England, of which Victoria is the head; and of Rome, of which the Pope is the sovereign pontiff, are both

monstrous abortions. It is a league formed between Christ and Belial—the church and the world. It is one of the spiritual frauds of Satan to defeat the objects of Christ in the formation of the church. They have effectually destroyed the barrier existing between the kingdoms of darkness and of light. In all such compacts, the church, instead of converting the world has been converted by it, and has furnished infidelity with the most potent weapons against the truth. Nothing but a divorce from this corrupt alliance can save such churches from ruin and loss. "Come out of her, my people," is the voice of Christ to all those who are in Babylon.

The first historical notice of the church as an organized body, is to be found in the last verse of the second chapter of the Acts: "And the Lord added to the church such as should be saved." The nucleus of the church consisted of one hundred and twenty disciples, male and female. To this may be added the Apostles. The first accessions on the day of Pentecost consisted of three thousand converts. This was the pledge of her triumph. At the giving of the law on Mount Sinai, three thousand rebels were slain; but at the advent of the Gospel, three thousand men, dead in trespasses and in sins were brought to life. Singular coincidence I How different

the organism of the Jewish and the Christian churches! The law came by Moses—the grace and the truth by Jesus Christ. Small as was the church in its beginning—compared in one of the parables to a grain of mustard seed, it was destined to fill the whole earth. It is the arch of promise spanning the heavens, with one foot resting on the day of Pentecost, in the earthly Jerusalem, and the other, on the heavenly Jerusalem, in that jubilee which shall announce the descent and herald the presence of the King of kings and Lord of lords! The chord of this arch reaches from Jerusalem that then was to the Jerusalem that shall be. In short, the Jerusalem church, and not the church of Rome, is the mother of all the churches. She has antiquity, apostolicity, and is destined to have universality.

God had from the beginning his witnesses on the earth from Abel to Noah, and from him to Abraham; but no community of saints, no assembly of believers, no stated meetings for worship, no *Ecclesia* or church is spoken of during this long period. We hear of men who "walked with God," "believers," "the righteous," "sons of God," but no organism called the church. In the days of Moses we hear for the first time of an assembly—called by Stephen, the first Chris-

tian martyr—" the church in the wilderness;" but we must not identify this with the church of Christ. The nation of Israel was in many respects typical of the church of the Redeemer. It had its "called out" from Egypt, its temporal Saviour, its lawgiver and mediator, its high priest and sacrifice, its tabernacle and Canaan. But we must not confound the shadow with the substance, the old covenant with the new—the son of the bondwoman with the children of the free.

Many were the promises made to the fathers of the nation, and to their descendants; and to David in particular, that he would raise up one—the seed of Abraham—the royal son of the house of David, who should sit on his throne and rule and reign forever. Jesus came in the fulness of the times; he was born of a woman—the son of a virgin—born under the law—born in Bethlehem. Thus was he the son of Abraham, and was allied to the Jews—the son of David, and was allied to royalty—the son of man, and was allied to the race, to the world—the son of the living God, and allied to the Father. All these relations he sustained, in becoming the Incarnate Word.

Heaven and earth unite in his person. He touches humanity at every point and lays his hand upon the throne of the universe. He who was

rich became poor, that he might not only sympathize with the great masses of the race—always poor and despised; but after accomplishing the work of redemption, he is exalted and reinvested with all royal honors and offices, that he might honor, enrich, and bless those who came under his dominion. His death opens up the way of pardon for the guilty, his burial reconciles us to the solitude of the grave, his resurrection demonstrates the fact of man's immortality—body, soul and spirit. His ascension secures to us the inheritance that is incorruptible and unfading in the heavens; and his perfected and glorious humanity is the pledge and type to us, of what awaits his redeemed family, in the everlasting kingdom over which he reigns.

One of the first things which he did after his exaltation, was to bestow with a kingly hand "his gifts to men." In the plenitude of his benevolence, he scatters munificently his largesses, his divine bounties, upon the infant church and his chosen Apostles. He sends down the Holy Spirit in fulfillment of ancient prophecy and his own promise. He administers his own baptism of light and love in the abundant influences he sheds upon the Apostles and the splendid gifts he confers upon them. He now, by his Spirit, inhabits the church as God did originally the

temple; and as an act of royalty he pardons three thousand of those who had been his betrayers and murderers, and attaches them to his person and government. Now, it is certain that no organization like this had ever before existed; no such gifts had ever been bestowed on men. No events can rival those that commemorate the coronation of the King of Zion, and the commencement of his reign.

Prophecy reaches its culminating point in the great events of that day, so far as the kingdom of heaven in its present form is concerned. Hear what one of the ancient seers had said, centuries before the events occurred. "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house, shall be established in the tops of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways and we will walk in his paths: *For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.*" (Isaiah ii. 2, 3.) Jesus commands his Apostles to begin their labors in Jerusalem. To go there and tarry in that city until they should be endued with power from on high. That the repentance and remis-

sion of sins to be preached to all nations in his name, was to commence in that city. And that the promised baptism of the Spirit should take effect there. All these facts are in exact fulfillment of the prophecies above referred to, and the repeated declarations of the Messiah.

From the fact then of such an organization so unique and original, which in its origin had to encounter so many difficulties in the death, the burial, the resurrection, the ascension of the Messiah; an institution set up by illiterate fishermen in the capital of the kingdom of the Jews, and in the sacred precincts of the temple; which won its first triumphs among those who crucified the King; and which occurred in exact fulfillment of many prophecies, and according to the expressed and repeated declarations of the Messiah—an order of things which survived the nation and the city in which it originated, and which overrun the Roman empire and saw its decline and fall; which survived the dark ages and dwelt in the rocks and fastnesses of the mountains, when the world was "drunk with the wine of Babylon," and "wondered after the Beast," and which still lives, fresh as the dew of heaven, "clear as the sun, fair as the moon, and as terrible," to the wicked and ungodly, "as an army with banners." That such anin-

stitution as this should have originated under the circumstances to which we have referred,—and these circumstances can alone account for its existence,—and that it still exists, and is full of promise for its perpetuity, are demonstrations in proof of the truth of Christianity which should silence all the cavils of sceptics, and solve their doubts and difficulties. The church now stands as "the pillar and foundation of the truth," having inscribed upon it, in letters of light, "Great is the mystery of Godliness. God was manifested in flesh, justified by the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on by the world, received up into glory."

Coleridge in his "Literary Remains" thus expresses himself: "The result of my own meditations is, that the evidence of the gospel, taken as a total, is as great for the Christians of the nineteenth century, as for those of the apostolic age. I should not be startled if I were told they were greater. But it does not follow that this equally holds good of each component part. An evidence of the most cogent clearness unknown to the primitive Christians, may compensate for the evanescence of some evidence which they enjoyed. Evidences comparatively dim have waxed into noon-day splendor, and the comparative wane of others once effulgent, is more

than indemnified by the synopsis of all which we enjoy, and by the standing miracle of a Christendom commensurate and almost synonymous with the civilized world."

The wonder of the existence and subsistence of a church in the world is so great, that Augustine says strikingly and with a deep truth, "that to believe or not to believe the miracles is only choosing an alternative of wonders. If you do not believe the miracles, you must believe this miracle, that the world was converted without miracles."

If the day of miracles has ceased, if "signs and wonders" no longer indicate the presence of God in giving proof to the authority of a divine institution, it is because they are no longer needed. There is no necessity for the re-enactment of the facts which constitute testimony, when the witnesses already have deposed, and their evidence has been recorded. The heavens still show the glory of God, though no Joshua is present to command the sun "to stand still on Gibeon, or the moon on Ajalon." The church exists as the pillar and ground of the truth, and equally with the heavens reflects the glory of its origin and the authority of its founder.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS DEMONSTRATED BY THE EARLY AND RAPID SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL.

LANGUAGE and religion are both from God. He gave us one when he gave us the other. They both claim him as their author. If God had never spoken to man he would himself have been always silent; or at least, his speech would have been but the natural signs of feeling, rather than of sentiment; the expressions of instinct, rather than the intelligible symbols of reason and of thought.

Speech was one, at the beginning; and would have remained so, had men continued to live side by side, without being scattered abroad in separate and distinct communities; this—reason, universal language, and scripture, all corroborate. As in the family so in the state, all by necessity learn to speak the same language. In the infancy of the world, there was but one language, and there could have been but one.

Univocal speech, however, in the course of time was lost, and men separated into distinct communities, and spoke in different dialects; and so have continued from that day to this. The only

account to be relied on for this difference, is that which is found in the scriptures of truth. It was by a direct act of God, for the impiety and rebellion of the race, that the one language was lost and speech became confused. "And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, Go to, let us build a city, and a tower whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the children of men builded. And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one and they have all one language; and this they begin to do; and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth; and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all

the earth. And from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth." (Gen. xi. 1-9.) It was then by impiety and disobedience that men lost the one language, which was originally spoken and which bound them together; and after their language became confused, they separated into distinct communities, and peopled the earth.

Whatever evil may have fallen upon the race by the loss of the one language, the confusion of tongues compelled them to seek other lands and people them; and thereby the original designs of God were subserved, in subduing the earth, and in taking possession of the vast domain which he has given to man. In addition to which, the spirit of evil was suddenly checked; and the race was thus prevented from reaching that perfection of wickedness, to which it was tending by too close a contact, and by the influence of a common language. Since then, from the germs of the separate and distinct languages precipitated upon man at the tower of Babel, all the forms of speech and innumerable dialects existing on the earth have sprung. The entire number of known languages and dialects in the world is 3664, and are thus distributed: American, 1624; Asiatic, 937; European, 587; African, 276; Oceanic, 240.

During the Jewish institution, no attempt was made to remedy this defect by the use of a common language or the gift of tongues. Whatever may have been the nature and extent of the miracles which originated that politico-religious system, it is certain that the gift of tongues, formed no part of it. As it was a divine institution, and partook in its structure of the supernatural, miracles were used not only at its commencement, but in the different stages of its history. And these miracles were in perfect harmony with it, though in many respects they differed in kind from those found in Christianity. They assumed the shape and form, and partook more of the nature of law than of grace; and therefore the ten plagues of Egypt, the smiting of the waters of the Red Sea, and all the phenomena of the desert. Mute nature was the theatre over which presided that dread power which was present, in its guardianship of ancient Israel. And the scale upon which these miracles was seen, corresponded with the magnitude of the evils sought to be corrected; and therefore nations felt and were appealed to by them. Egypt on the one hand, and Israel on the other. It was a contest between Jehovah, as lord of the whole earth, and the gods of the nations,—the gods of the "hills and the valleys." And as

polytheism had become a stupendous power, having its seat in Egypt—the most enlightened portion of the globe—it was deemed necessary, that this contest for pre-eminence should be kept open, public, and exhibited upon as large a scale as was needed to accomplish the objects designed. But even then, there was not the same freedom in the exercise of this power, by Moses and the prophets, as by the Saviour and his Apostles. The rod of Aaron was always in his hand, as the instrument of that strange work; or the tree must be cast into the waters of Marah, to change and to sweeten them. And the same was true, in regard to the miracles wrought by Joshua, at the walls of Jericho—the process was slow, though the result was certain; and so of the miracles of Elijah and Elisha, and other prophets in the Jewish age. But it is worthy of remark, that the highest form of the supernatural—that of the gift of tongues—a miracle purely spiritual and ethical, never was known under the Jewish age. It was no part of the agency necessary to accomplish the objects of that fleshly institution. It would not have been homogeneous; it was not in fact needed; and God does nothing in vain.

Judaism was the religion of a single family, or community of families; all speaking the same

language, and there was no necessity for an appeal to foreign tongues, in order to subserve the purposes of that religion. Besides, it was not a proselyting institution; the nations of the earth were not to be converted to it. No apostles were to be sent to other people, to introduce them to the knowledge of Judaism; much less was it required, that the world should be embraced within the domain of this religion. The very nature of the institution forbade it.

The Jews were the descendants of a single family. They received the rite of circumcision as a fence, to guard them from all other nations. Their language, their civil and religious observances, were designed to keep them apart from all other people; and the territory they occupied secluded them from contact with all others. Even the seven nations which inhabited the land of Canaan were first subdued before the Jews could, with safety, take possession of the land promised to them and their fathers; and they were forbidden to form any alliance with them. For a similar reason they were forbidden to raise or purchase horses, and other beasts of burden, lest they might return into Egypt, or make incursions into neighboring countries. From these considerations the gift of tongues was not required, either by the people or the nature of the

institution under which they lived. It was not demanded by them for religion or commerce, or for intercourse with other nations.

Christianity was designed for the race, and was to be of perpetual obligation; and therefore in its permanent establishment upon the earth, this gift was needed. Besides, it more happily corresponded with the spiritual nature of Christianity; as this was the perfection of all God's revelations to man, and was given to him when he had reached his majority, and had passed from the leading strings of infancy and childhood. It was proper that a gift of all others the purest and the least suspicious, and one which anticipated the elements of progress, should have been thus bestowed. That the gift of tongues was not continued, but has passed away with the other "signs and wonders" of the apostolic age, is by no means anomalous; nor is it to be regretted. The effect of this gift upon those who possessed it in the church at Corinth, shows that it would not have been desirable to continue it during the entire existence of the Christian age. "Knowledge puffeth up—love builds up." The moral is superior to the intellectual. "The faith, the hope, and the love," were to abide forever, in the church, after this and all other miracles should have passed away. Had this gift been

continued in the church, civilization would never have attained its present form. The mind, passive in the reception of language, would never have reached that improvement and elevation now attained, if left entirely to its influence.

While then this gift was needed to introduce and establish Christianity on the earth, and for its rapid spread throughout the world, it is not required as a means to propagate it during all the ages of its existence. It would have been contrary to all the dealings of God with men, that it should be so. He requires us to exercise our reason and intellect on all subjects, and by every method that the nature of the case may demand. And as language is attainable by the ordinary processes of instruction and application; and as the exercise of the mind in its attainment is one of great value, it was far better that the mind should remain in the free use of all the means and appliances, which nature and art furnished, than to continue a gift which belongs rather to infancy than to manhood. For in acquiring the language in which we are born the mind is perfectly passive as in the reception of a spiritual gift; and it makes no more special effort in the one case than in the other. Our vernacular speech is a gift bestowed upon us by our parents. But this is not the case in regard to a

foreign tongue; we must acquire it by our own personal and often painful efforts. And here we see, as in thousands of instances, a striking example of the analogy subsisting between nature and religion.

In the infancy of the new church—that "One New Man,"—as in all infancy, language was a gift. But when infancy gives place to maturity, then the mind is left to its own native powers, under the conditions of its being, to pursue its own course. The gift of tongues, like all other supernatural "helps," belonged to a state of absolute helplessness. The infant church would have perished without such aid. But neither in nature or in religion is it proper to regard or treat the members as if they were always in a state of infancy or nonage. In regard to the new born child of God, an Apostle said, "I have fed you with milk and not with meat." Milk for babes, meat for full,-grown men, is the order both of nature and of religion. The gift of tongues was demanded by the church in its infancy; but when it became a man, it put away this and all other "childish things."

Some have thought, that the spiritual gifts of the apostolic church would have continued, had she remained pure and uncorrupt from the beginning; but we have no such idea. And

many, even now, deem it desirable, that they should be restored, and actually labor under the delusion that they have been or will be, as in the case of Edward Irving and his followers, and the more shameful imposture of Mormonism. But no one who understands the nature of Christianity, or the element of progress which it has developed, could entertain such an opinion, or harbor such a wish. They virtually declare that Christianity has proved a failure, and that its original testimonies were insufficient, and would, in a spiritual sense, realize the monstrous idea, of a man entering the second time "into his mother's womb" in order to undergo a second birth. No such acts are to be found either in the natural or in the spiritual kingdom, To confirm the views here given, and to prove that the moral elements of the Gospel should "abide," after the "helps" referred to had passed away, see 1 Cor., xiii.

Spiritual gifts, including the one under consideration, were predicted as consequent upon the ascension of the Messiah, and as indicating the commencement of the new dispensation. Ps. lxxviii. 17, 18; Eph. iv., 8-13; Heb. ii. 4; 1 Cor. xiv. 21; Isaiah xxviii. 11; Joel ii. 28-32.

All these spiritual gifts were bestowed by the Messiah after his ascension to the heavens,

whither he had gone to receive from the Father the Comforter, (the Advocate,) the Holy Spirit,—to be sent in his name, to teach the Apostles all things connected with the objects of their mission, and to bring to their remembrance whatever the Messiah had hitherto taught them, and to be his witness to the world. "But the comforter,—which is the Holy Spirit,—whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." (John xiv. 26.) "But when the comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me." (John xv. 26.)

It is worthy of remark, and will show the admirable precision with which the Apostles speak on all things connected with Christianity, that Paul affirms, "that no man can say that *Jesus is Lord*, but by the Holy Spirit." (1 Cor. xii. 3.) He does not say, that no one can affirm that "he is the Christ, the son of the living God" but by the Holy Spirit, but that no one can say that Jesus is "Lord." It was by the revelation of the Father, that we learn that Jesus is his son; but it is by the revelation of the Holy Spirit,—as on the day of Pentecost,—that we are assured that he is "Lord,"—the crowned and anointed

Lord of the universe. (Math. xvi. 16-19; Acts ii. 33-36.) Had it not been for the "ministry of the Spirit," which commenced on the day of Pentecost, the unseen and absent "Lord" would never, as such have been known; and therefore no one could say he was Lord but by "the Holy Spirit." This does not refer to any special communications to men now at their conversion, but to the open, public announcement of his sovereignty on the day of his coronation.

And here we will offer a few remarks on the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

In no sense of the word did this ever occur under the Old Testament, or during the personal ministry of Christ on earth. John baptized in water, and so did the disciples of Jesus, during the period to which we refer. And in the last commission given to the Apostles, they were commanded by the Messiah to baptize (in water) all the converts they made. But it was the special prerogative of the crowned Lord and Christ, to administer the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

"I indeed baptize you with (in) water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; he shall baptize you with (in) the Holy Spirit and in fire." (Matt. iii. 11.) "For John truly baptized with (in) water; but you shall be

baptized with (in) the Holy Spirit, not many days hence." (Acts i. 5.)

This baptism of the Holy Spirit was designed to communicate the gift of tongues, and invariably accompanied it. "And they were all Riled with the Holy Spirit, (viz. the Apostles,) and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." (Acts ii. 4) This occurred on the day of Pentecost for the benefit of the Jewish people. Another baptism of the Spirit is recorded with special reference to the Gentile world. "While Peter yet spoke these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all them which heard the word; for they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God." (Acts x. 44, 46.) It was this baptism of the Holy Spirit that gave assurance to Peter that the Gentiles were to be received into the kingdom, and justified him in their baptism in water. He refers expressly to their baptism in the Holy Spirit as evinced by the gift of tongues bestowed on the Gentiles, and in fulfillment of the word of the Lord. "And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord how that he said, John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit." (Acts xi. 15, 16.)

Only on two occasions was the baptism of the Holy Spirit administered; and these were of a distinctly marked character. The first was on the day of Pentecost, when the gospel was preached to the Jews; and the second, in the house of Cornelius, when the same gospel was preached to the gentiles. In the commencement of the reign, over these two grand divisions of the race, did Jesus, with his own hand, perform this act. Paul refers to this open and public event, when he says, "By one spirit ore we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or gentiles." (1 Cor. xii. 13.) Into the one body the Church—Jews and Gentiles, at the origin of the Christian institution were constitutionally admitted. This he speaks of when dwelling upon the "diversities" of the operations of the Spirit, under the head of spiritual gifts.

In no case was this a necessary part of the process of their conversion. Indeed it is doubtful if the Apostles, (who were Jews, and at the time disciples), were not the only persons who received this baptism on the day of Pentecost, and it is certain that the gentiles heard the word, and believed, before they received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It was not to be repeated then nor at any subsequent period. It served the purpose of a recognition of the Jews on the one

hand, and of the gentiles on the other, into the one body of Christ; and as an introduction into that higher spiritual element which presided over it. Just as baptism to the penitent believer, in water, is to be administered but once, in order to enter into Christ, so the Spirit's baptism was administered once to the Jews and once to the gentiles. The baptism of the Spirit, like all other spiritual gifts, has passed away, having answered the purposes intended by it. Instead of this we have, in the Church, the habitation of God through the Spirit to abide forever; the supernatural giving place to the moral and the spiritual.

The Spirit's baptism was wholly supernatural, and belonged to the childhood of the church; and it was invariably connected with the gift of tongues. This indeed was its chief design.

It was the baptism of spirit in Spirit, and the effects of it were felt and heard in the bestowment of new words and thoughts—the legitimate fruit of Spirit upon spirit, or true spiritual manifestations. The minds of the Apostles and those of the Gentiles referred to, were wholly brought under the influence of the Spirit, immersed into those influences, so that they thought and spoke, not of their own will, or by their own suggestion, but wholly under the will and suggestion of the Holy Spirit. This was the immersion

of spirit in the Holy Spirit—the grandest—
—sublimest act ever performed, and the results
the most marvelous ever witnessed. It was a
gift surpassing all that ever had been conferred,
as it was the highest intellectual endowment ever
bestowed. Other miracles took effect upon the
bodies of men, or on brute matter; but this took
effect upon mind—spirit; and gave immediate
birth to new and unknown forms of speech in
perfection; and to equally new and spiritual
thoughts, "hidden from the sages and the
learned" of all antiquity. Such as "eye had
not seen nor ear heard, neither had entered into
the heart of man to conceive," but which God had
now "revealed" to the Apostles and others by
his Spirit. (1 Cor. ii. 9.)

This act, the baptism of the Spirit, was not
done by the Apostles in the name of Christ, as
were the miracles subsequently; they, in fact,
were the recipients of it, and had no control or
agency in its bestowment.

It was not done by the Father as a direct act
of his will, independent of the Messiah, but done
with reference to the economical authority con-
ferred upon him as "Lord and Christ."

It was not the free and unconstrained act of
the Holy Spirit, operating "upon whom he will;"
but Jesus having received the promise of the

Spirit from the Father, sent him down with all the splendid gifts he brought from the seat of empire—the throne of the Majesty in the heavens. It will be seen then how important was this baptism, and how necessary the gift of tongues which accompanied its administration.

Let us now proceed in the further development of the main subject of our argument. By reference to the commission as given to the Apostles, we learn that their held of labor was—the world—all nations—and every creature embraced in the human family, without exception or limitation. We will present to the reader an induction of this commission. "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be *condemned*." (Mark xvi. 15, 16.) It is added: "And they went forth and preached *everywhere*, the *Lord working with them and confirming* the word with *signs following*." (v. 24.) Among these signs was the gift of tongues.

"Go ye therefore and teach (disciple) *all nations*, baptizing them in (into) the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Teaching them to observe all (the) things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo I am with

you alway, even unto the end of the world (age), Amen." (Matt, xxviii. 19, 20.)

"Then opened he their understanding that they might understand the scriptures. And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved (the) Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name and among *all nations*, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things." (Luke xxiv. 45-48.)

"But ye shall receive *power*," (the power of the Spirit), "after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto (for) me, both in *Jerusalem and in Judea and in Samaria*, and unto *the uttermost parts of the earth*." (Acts i. 8.)

Thus the Apostles were to go throughout "the world"—"to all nations"—"everywhere," and preach the gospel to "every creature." And Luke, in the Acts, specifies in a summary way their field of labor—"in Jerusalem, in all Judea, in Samaria, and to the *uttermost* parts of the earth."

As Christianity then was for man—for the race, it was to be preached to all men, and preached by the Apostles. And this they did, and this no other men have ever done, and probably never will do.

" But I say, have they not heard? Yes, verily,

their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world." (Rom. x. 18.) "The gospel, which is come unto you, as in all the world." "And be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven." (Col. i. 5, 6, 23.)

No commission was ever so large as this, and no difficulties were so formidable to encounter and overcome as then existed. Difficulties independent of all moral considerations, growing out of the ignorance of the Apostles, and their want of education, and the many languages into which the gospel was to be introduced—and introduced by them.

Nothing could have exceeded the rashness of such an enterprise, either on the part of the Saviour, who originated it, or his Apostles who were to execute it, as this. And that it would prove a failure without supernatural aid, such as we have spoken of, is absolutely certain. And yet neither the Saviour nor his Apostles had any misgivings in regard to the results. And the facts in the case fully prove the success of their mission. What more convincing argument is needed to establish the truth of the Christian religion!

Let us look at the extent of the Roman empire, and the field of operation, which lay before

these missionaries—the Apostles, and we shall form some idea of the magnitude of their work, and the difficulties they had to overcome in the prosecution of it. The Roman empire extended, in the Augustan age, from Scandinavia on the north to the Indian Ocean on the south; and from the Atlantic Ocean on the west to the Indian Ocean on the east—embracing Europe, Asia, Africa, and the islands of the seas. And yet there were distant portions of the globe unconquered by this colossal power. Our own continent and Australia were then unknown. The three great continents, with the islands of the seas contiguous to them, were all brought under the dominion of the Roman government. This then was the world over which the Apostles were to travel, and propagate the gospel of Christ.

The population of these quarters of the globe we cannot with absolute certainty give. But by instituting a comparison with the present census, in the different portions of the earth, we will arrive at some just conclusions with regard to it. At the present time, there is said to be a population of one thousand millions on the earth. We suppose that at least six hundred millions may be found in the older continents, perhaps eight hundred. Now it would not be too extravagant a calculation for us to say that there were existing

under the wings of the Roman eagles and other known and accessible portions of the world then, a population of six hundred millions. We do not suppose that all these were to be visited and each one to hear the gospel. But there was no limitation given to the commission under which the Apostles acted, and the world was before them. And if they could, and did successfully preach the word to any one of them, in a language in which they had been untaught, they could by the same means, and might have compassed the entire field; and this is sufficient for our argument.

It is now an ascertained fact, that there are more than three thousand different tongues and dialects spoken among the various tribes and nations of the earth. Suppose then, that there were but one thousand—five hundred—or even but one hundred; reduce it to the lowest possible number within the boundaries of truth and probability, and you will have the premises on which our argument is based. But as Asia has ever been the hive of nations, the languages spoken on that continent must have been very numerous.

We wish to state a few undeniable facts, as the basis of our plea. The Gospel within the first century of its existence was not only fully established, but successfully propagated throughout the known

world. In Jerusalem and all Judea, in Samaria and to the uttermost parts of the earth. We will give a schedule of the labors of Paul as found in the New Testament. He went to Damascus in Syria, in Arabia, Caesarea, Antioch Silicia, Cyprus, Salamis, Paphos, Perga, Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, Attalia, Neapolis, Philippi, Amphipolis, Apollonia, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, Assos, Mytelene, Chios, Samos, Trogyllium, Melitus, Cos, Rhodes, Patara, Tyre, Ptolemais, Sidon, Crete, Phenicia, Melita, Syracuse, Rome, and Spain. He also says that "from Jerusalem round about unto Illyricum he had *fully* preached the Gospel of Christ." (Rom. xv. 19.)

In addition to which, we refer to the first discourse preached by the Apostle Peter and the eleven on the day of Pentecost. "Parthians, Medes and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Lybia about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians," all heard in their "own tongues, the wonderful works of God." (Acts ii. 2-4.)

Peter sent his first Epistle to the "strangers, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." And John in the

Revelations, sent letters to the seven churches in Lesser Asia. To the church at Ephesus, in Smyrna, in Pergamos, in Thyatira, in Sardis, in Philadelphia, in Laodicea.

The Apostles were commanded by the Saviour to tarry in Jerusalem, until they should be endowed with power from on high. They obeyed this command, and did not attempt to preach the Gospel until they had thus been empowered with the requisite qualifications from "on high." On the day of Pentecost, being assembled in one place with the other disciples, about one hundred and twenty in all, "Suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty rushing wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them: and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." (Acts ii. 2-4.) By this power from on high, the Apostles were enabled to speak in a variety of foreign tongues which they had never learned; and to speak not only intelligibly, but to the conviction of their numerous hearers. And thus were they put in possession of a gift, by which they could go to all portions of the earth, and have ready access to the minds of men in their several languages in preaching the Gospel, and in

making any farther revelations to their converts, according to Christ's promise which may have been needed. Nothing could have exceeded this gift, and no other could have been given to have answered its purpose.

On this day—the commencement of the kingdom of Christ—there were Jews and proselytes from seventeen different portions of the earth, and speaking as many tongues and dialects, so that they all marveled that these Galileans should have such resources of language and powers of utterance; and the result, as we know, was the conversion of three thousand persons on that day. This was one of the greatest achievements ever known before or since; and was a fit and suitable earnest and pledge of the success which should attend the labors of the Apostles everywhere, in carrying out the objects of their mission.

The converts in returning home formed the nucleus of many congregations, afterward visited by the Apostles, as in the city of Rome; so that even without their aid they would be able to propagate the Gospel of Christ by reproclaiming it, and telling of the wonders of the day of Pentecost and the effects produced in their own conversion. Thus the church at Rome was formed by the "Jews and proselytes."—"strangers," who were present on the day of Pentecost, and

were numbered among the hearers and the converts. We have no evidence that any Apostle had ever visited Rome before Paul: and when he wrote his Epistle, "their faith had been spoken of throughout the whole world." It is evident that the original converts made by the Apostles, to some extent, were endowed with supernatural gifts, as directions are given to the saints at Rome for their proper exercise. Paul desired also to visit them that he might impart, perhaps to the disciples made by the first converts, some "spiritual gift," or it may be some gift not hitherto possessed. (Rom. i. 11; chap. xii.)

It will be remembered that the Apostles chiefly confined their labors to the towns and cities. These were populous, and as now, were great places of resort. Paul tarried in Ephesus upward of two years: "so that all they who were in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks," (Hellenists.) Ephesus was the seat of the idolatrous worship in Asia; the temple of Diana was situated there, at whose shrine "all Asia and the world worshiped." Here then, as in other cities, the Apostles would have access to the different tribes and nations of the earth; and without extending their travels over large districts and visiting all persons and families, they would gain an audience in all Ian-

guages. (Acts xix. 8-10.) And thus, by economizing both time and labor, they propagated over extensive fields the Gospel of Christ.

Most of the Epistles were sent to churches in large cities; and the gift of tongues formed a prominent part in the supernatural appendages of the Gospel, inasmuch as there was constant use for its exercise for the instruction of those who were in the church and for the conversion of "barbarians." (1 Cor. xiv.)

Testimonies in favor of all the great facts of the Gospel history and the establishment and rapid spread of Christianity are abundant; though doubtless, many of the early records, which would furnish additional evidence on these questions, have perished. But sufficient remains, both as furnished by friends and foes, to enable us to make just and satisfactory conclusions in regard to them.

That Jesus lived in the reign of Tiberius, Emperor of Rome, and that he suffered death under Pontius Pilate, the Roman procurator in Judea, are facts alike corroborated by Jews and Christians; the latter of whom have commemorated the facts of his death, resurrection, and ascension from the day of the establishment of Christianity, to the present time. The Lord's Day, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, have

been observed from the commencement of Christianity to our own day.

The genuineness of the Books of the New Testament is unquestionable. They have been quoted or alluded to by a series of Christian writers, as well as by adversaries of the Christian faith. They may be traced back in regular succession from the present time to the apostolic age. Barnabas, the fellow-laborer of Paul; Clement, Bishop of Rome, and a fellow-laborer of Paul; Hermas, his contemporary and co-laborer; Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, A. D. 70; Polycarp, a disciple of John the Apostle, Bishop of Smyrna, have all spoken of the great events and facts of the New Testament, and were extensively engaged in the propagation of the Christian religion. Among the fathers of the church we find some in distant and remote portions of the world. At Rome, at Antioch, at Smyrna, in Syria, in France, at Athens, at Carthage, at Hippo—the two latter places in Africa. And in all these places there were numerous Christians and churches to be found; and so long had they existed, that councils were held, even in Africa, represented by bishops and other dignitaries from large districts, indicating that they had long existed, and had become very numerous.

Of Celsus and Porphyry, two powerful ene-

mies of the Christian religion, Chrysostom remarks with equal force and justice that they were "powerful witnesses for the antiquity of the New Testament, since they could not have argued against the tenets of the Gospel, if it had not existed in that early period." All the great facts of the Gospel history they have acknowledged; Porphry also, had conversed with Christians in Tyre, in Sicily, and in Rome, Julian the Apostate did not deny the truth of the Gospel history as a question of fact; he acknowledged the principal items of the Christian faith, as well as the miracles of Christ and the Apostles, and also at a time when, both in Italy and Greece, numerous converts were to be found to the Christian religion.

"By rejecting the Gospel, persons are compelled to maintain, in opposition to positive credible testimony, that extensive important events have taken place without an adequate cause. They must maintain the reality of miracles greater than Christians believe, and which accord neither with the nature of God nor the condition of man, but which involve absurdities, contradictions, and impossibilities."

The testimony of Tacitus, corroborated as it is by cotemporary writers, may be thus summed up:—

1. That Jesus Christ was put to death as a malefactor by Pontius Pilate, procurator under Tiberius.

2. That from Christ, the people called Christians derived their name and sentiments.

3. That this religion, or "superstition" (as he calls it), had its rise in Judea, where it also spread, notwithstanding the ignominious death of its founder, and the opposition which his followers afterward experienced from the people of that country.

4. That it was propagated from Judea into other parts of the world, as far as Rome; where in the tenth or eleventh year of Nero, and before that time, the Christians were very numerous. His language is *ungens multitudo*—a *vast multitude*.

5. That the professors of this religion were reproached and hated, and underwent many and grievous sufferings.

Pliny the Younger, in his famous letter to Trajan, A. D. 107, thus in part writes: "Suspending therefore all judicial proceedings, I have recourse to you for advice; for it has appeared to me a matter highly deserving consideration, especially on account of the *great number* of persons who are in danger of suffering; for many of all ages and every rank, of both sexes

likewise, are accused and will be accused. Nor has the contagion of their superstition seized cities only, but the lesser towns also and the open country."

Now Pliny was lieutenant and *propraetor*, with *proconsular* power, under Trajan, in the provinces of Pontus and Bithynia, both of which are spoken of by Peter, in his first epistle, as countries in which Christians were known, and to whom in part he addressed his first general epistle. They were both provinces of the Roman empire, and situated in Asia Minor, near the Euxine Sea. In these remote countries, at the close of the first and commencement of the second centuries, according to the testimony of Pliny, corroborated by Peter, great multitudes of Christians were to be found. So many as to arrest the judicial proceedings instituted against them by the Roman authorities, inasmuch as there were so many of all ages, sexes, and conditions in danger of suffering,—not "in the towns and cities only, but in the open country."

Scarcely two months had elapsed after the death of Christ, when his Apostles suddenly presented themselves and publicly taught in Jerusalem, where their doctrine spread throughout Judea and the neighboring provinces. Shortly After it was carried into Greece, Italy, and Spain.

Churches were founded in the cities of Caesarea, Rome, Athens, Corinth, Thessalonica, Philippi, Antioch, Ephesus, and in many other regions, towns, and cities; so that (as heathen adversaries, together with Christian writers, acknowledge) before three centuries were completed, and indeed at the conclusion of the first, the Gospel had penetrated into every region of the then known world, and far beyond the boundaries of the Roman empire.

The letter of Adrian deserves especial notice. He was the husband of Paulina, the emperor's sister, and was consul A. D. 134, and had been some time in Egypt. Afterward, in Syria, he wrote to his brother-in-law, in the year 134. He thus writes: "The worshipers of Serapis are Christians, and they are devoted to Serapis who call themselves Christians; and they are devoted to Serapis who call themselves Christ's bishops. There is no ruler of the Jewish synagogue, no Samaritan, no mathematician, no soothsayer, no anointer; even the Patriarch, if he should come to Egypt, would be required to worship Serapis, by others, Christ—a seditious and turbulent people. However, the city is rich and populous. Nor are any idle. Some are employed in making glass; others, paper; others, in weaving linen. They have one God. Him the Christians—Him

the Jews—Him the Gentile people worship." Passing by the confused account that Adrian gives of the population and manners of the people of Egypt, it is evident, from this letter, that Christians were numerous at Alexandria and other parts of Egypt, when Adrian was in that country.

Eusebius says, that in the reign of Adrian, "The Christian religion shone out in the eyes of all men."

Thus in proconsular Asia and Egypt, churches and Christians were numerous in the days of Adrian. A single age from the very lifetime of the Messiah, and soon after the death of John the Apostle, they had their bishops and deacons, and had formed themselves into large and powerful communities. And it must have taken much time to have accomplished this.

Indeed, we have the testimony of Jews and Gentiles, friends and foes,—among them Josephus, the Mishna, Tacitus, Suetonius, Pliny, Trajan, Adrian, the two Antonines, and Lucian, together with a host of Christian apologists and martyrs,—that all sorts of people—Jews, pagans, barbarians, bond and free—confessed their faith in Christ, and were numbered among the saved, in the first and second centuries of the Christian era.

As early as the tenth year of Nero's reign,

about thirty years after the crucifixion of the Messiah, Tacitus speaks of the "multitude" of Christians discovered even in the midst of the most grievous and bloody persecutions to which they were subjected, under the reign of that emperor. From these and similar testimonies, it will appear that the Gospel, in the first ages of its announcement, was extensively propagated, and that too among far and distant nations.

From the records to which we already have appealed, both of friends and foes, not only were Christians to be numbered by myriads, and churches in towns and cities to be found, but also- in villages and throughout the open country. Pliny declares in the century following the first age of the church, that he found the temples in Achaia almost deserted, in consequence of the progress of Christianity. And Tertullian subsequently declares that "if the Christians were to withdraw, whole cities and provinces would be depopulated." The various people in Getulia, the countries of the Moors; all the borders of Spain; the different nations of Gaul, and those parts of Britain which the Romans could not reach: the Sarmatiae, with the Dacii, the Germans and the Scythians, were brought under the influence of the Gospel of Christ. From the limited knowledge we have of the early ages of

the Christian Church, we cannot state with certainty how many of these different tribes were visited by the Apostles, and to what extent they propagated the Gospel in their day; but sufficient has already been given to assure us, that numerous countries, speaking different languages, received the Gospel from their hands; and the universal prevalence of Christianity, as noted by subsequent and cotemporary writers,—friends and foes,—indicate that the churches planted, must have been of long standing; and the demolition of Polytheism, in a short time after its introduction, proves that the success of the Gospel was a fixed and acknowledged fact

PROPOSITION.

The rapid and certain spread of the Gospel among all nations by the labors of the Apostles, is a demonstration for the truth of Christianity.

We have seen that the first gift bestowed upon the Apostles was the gift of tongues; and that in the exercise of this gift on the day of Pentecost, persons' from seventeen different portions of the globe, and speaking as many languages, heard in their own vernacular the Gospel of Christ, and were saved by the belief and obedience of it.

We cannot too much admire the wisdom and

foresight of the author of the Christian system in the bestowment of this gift. We doubt if any one, not possessed of Divine prescience, as was the Saviour,—for in him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily,—could have conceived of such an element of power for the accomplishment of so stupendous a work. The Apostles did not anticipate it, and probably were as much confounded by these new and brilliant gifts, as those who witnessed them. And that Jesus of Nazareth—if he were only a man—could have suggested such a method of carrying out such designs, much less to have accomplished it is beyond all belief!

This then, was the primal gift—a gift without which even the first discourse could not have been preached to the motley crowd assembled on the Pentecost! How wise, how admirable, how orderly the bestowment of this gift! It is perfectly in harmony with all that Jesus did whilst on earth. If the Apostles had been left to their own ingenuity and wisdom, they never would have thought of it: and if they had, all attempts to exercise it unaided from on high, would have proved a failure; and if the united wisdom of the world had been consulted, no greater power than this could have been demanded. No gift could have been bestowed so free from imposture, both with respect to those exercising it and those who were

the witnesses of it. If the Apostles, without this power, should have attempted it, they would have been conscious of their own hypocrisy and deception; or if laboring under any hallucination of mind or perversity of will, it would at once have been detected. No more hazardous attempt could have been made, provided the Apostles had been impostors, than this, as it would have resulted in confusion and defeat. But the results show that there was no trick, no delusion, and no failure; thousands on the day of Pentecost, and subsequently, were converted by the efforts of the Galileans, and those efforts chiefly resulted from the exercise of this gift!

The one language at the Tower of Babel, in consequence of the loss of the true religion and the impiety of the race, was lost, and the effect of this was the disunion and separation of men as seen in their subsequent history; and now, "in the fullness of the time," when a new religion for the race was about to be introduced, the object of which was to unite all men by a common faith, into one universal brotherhood, the gift of tongues was conferred upon the Apostles of this religion, and on many of their converts; a common vehicle of thought and intercommunion was thus opened. When the race apostatized, and their condition morally and religiously be-

came hopeless, they lost the common language which was spoken; and now, when God was about to reconcile the world unto himself through his Son, and by the same act to reconcile Jews and Gentiles to each other; and out of the midst of an alienated world, "hateful and hating one another," to form one harmonious and happy family, in restoring a common language to the Apostles of this new religion, speech was restored. The curse of Babel, if not removed, at least met with a divine compensation in the gift of tongues. A universal currency of thought was thus struck from the infinite mind of "the Spirit of wisdom and revelation," and put into the hands of the Apostles for the benefit of the world, having on it the name and the superscription of the reigning Monarch of the world—"Jesus, the Messiah." This was bringing order out of confusion, light out of darkness, a common language out of Babelism, and with it a new religion from the heavens! It was the highest, noblest gift of an intellectual character ever bestowed—one naturally the most difficult to obtain, and never to any perfection, but by the labors of a lifetime. This has been felt by all who have acquired an extensive knowledge of their own and foreign languages. The Apostles not only spoke in one but in all languages, and that

too with precision and effect. Not the commonplace thoughts of others, but new, original, spiritual, sublime thoughts, such as hitherto had not entered into the heart of man to conceive. This was the consummation of Divine wisdom. It was the primal Light of the new creation. It was the "Let there be light, and light was." It was the spiritual affluence from on high poured out upon the darkened intellect of the light-bearers of the world. It was God who shined into the hearts of the Apostles, as he of old shined into the material orbs at the genesis of the old creation. It was the sign and token of a presence and a power that no angel, demon, or man could have simulated! How true is it that God alone "does wondrous things!" and this was one of them. Not wonderful to him, or for him to do, but wonderful to us, as it was to those who first witnessed it. God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all; and he has but to reveal his face, and darkness, and ignorance, and impotence at once vanish.

But in connection with the Apostles, many of their converts received this extraordinary gift to a considerable extent, both in speaking and in interpreting what was spoken and written. This is evident from an examination of the apostolic letters addressed to the churches.

On the necessity for this gift, it has been said, with great propriety, that "The doctrine of the gospel being entirely different from all the ideas which the heathen had been accustomed to entertain on religious subjects, any interpretation of what was delivered by the Spirit in a foreign language, made without a supernatural direction, might have led the church into error. Further, the faculty of interpreting foreign languages by inspiration was, in another respect, a gift very necessary in the first age. For the books of the Old Testament being written in Hebrew, a language not then understood by the vulgar even in Judea, and the writings of the Apostles and Evangelists being all written in the Greek tongue, on account of its emphasis and precision, and that tongue being nowhere spoken by the common people, except in Greece and some cities in Lesser Asia—if there had not been in every church inspired interpreters, who could translate these divinely inspired writings into the common languages, they would have been in a great measure useless, especially at the beginning, when the knowledge of them was most wanted. Whereas, every church having inspired interpreters of foreign languages commonly present in their religious assemblies, to translate the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures into the language of the country—

the common people everywhere had an opportunity of deriving from these writings, all the knowledge and comfort, they are fitted to yield."

There was a divinely inspired class of interpreters in the Apostolic church, called "helpers," whose duty it was, for the edification of the church, to translate the foreign tongues into the vernacular languages spoken by the common people, that all alike might be instructed and comforted. It will be remembered that these assemblies in the cities were composed of persons speaking a variety of languages; and without such supernatural aid they would have remained in ignorance of the inspired truths communicated by those who were gifted with foreign tongues. It does not appear that these interpreters were needed by the Apostles in publishing the Gospel, as they could speak in all languages without the aid of interpreters; but in the church, the members for their mutual edification had this gift bestowed upon them.

The Epistles direct those who were emulous to speak in foreign tongues in the church, that unless they could interpret, or had some one to aid them in this work, they should keep silent; for "God is not the author of confusion but of order in all the churches." He urges them to seek the gift of interpretation, if they would speak in

foreign tongues. In this way, they would "excell to the edifying of the church." He directs "him that speaketh in an unknown tongue, to pray that he may interpret." "For greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying." (1 Cor. xiv. 5.) Prophesying here, evidently means teaching.

These directions show that the Apostle urges his Corinthian brethren, to pray that they may interpret, in the church, what they may speak in a foreign tongue.

The presumption is, that the speaker in the church silently interpreted from the foreign tongue into the language of the common people, and then audibly communicated it. This was a mental process; and just as a man speaking now two languages will think in the one with which he is most familiar, and then speak in the one which at the time being is needed, so of these gifted men. Thus an Englishman, speaking in the German or any other language, will think in his own language, and interpret it into the foreign one, and then give utterance to his thoughts in that tongue.

But in case the speaker in a foreign language could not interpret, and had no "helper" in the difficult process, he was to keep silence. "If

there be no interpreter let him keep silence in the church, and let him speak to himself and to God." (1 Cor. xiv. 28.)

All persons who have undertaken the ordinary work of translation, know the difficulty there is in giving the idiomatic phrases of any language literally in another, so as to give the idea and spirit of the author as clearly and faithfully as he himself had uttered them; and therefore the need in the apostolic churches for this class of men, inasmuch as the Christian religion employed new words to give expression to new ideas, conformed to the idioms of all the languages in which it was originally spoken. It will appear then, that the work of interpreting or translating into all languages, so as to express infallibly the mind of the Spirit, was as manifest a gift as the speaking in foreign tongues itself.

In order to show the nature of this work, namely, that of translating, and the difficulties in the way of effecting it with harmony and precision, we call attention, by way of illustration, to the ordinary process. It will appear that no labor is so great, requiring more skill and learning than this; and therefore the ablest and profoundest scholars have alone succeeded in it. And after the utmost effort to reach perfection, there have always been, and will be, many fail-

ures. The structure of no two languages is alike, and the idiomatic phrases differ so widely, that it is almost impossible to adapt the one to the other. Not unfrequently a too literal translation will be as unlike the original, as the dry and withered mummy is to the living man.

The translation of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures into the Latin Vulgate, was the work of an ordinary lifetime, as the facilities to accomplish the design were not so great then as now.

Wickliffe devoted the best portion of his life to the business of translating the New Testament into the English tongue.

King James' Bible, now in use, was the result of the united labors of forty-seven persons. It was commenced under the auspices of the king, and every possible aid was afforded in the accomplishment of the work, and yet it took many years to effect it; and it was not considered in that age perfect, and was received with much caution and distrust, and not without great opposition. The work began in 1607, and was finished and published in 1611; and this was simply a revision, not an original translation. McKnight spent many years on the Epistles in his translation from the Greek; and Dr. George Campbell devoted thirty years of his life on the four Gospels. These men had learning and leisure, and

all the facilities at hand for the accomplishment of their task, but neither of them considered his work perfect.

The American Bible Union, proceeding with great caution, and governed by the most exact and precise rules, have been engaged in the work of revision for three or four years, and have only laid the foundation for their future labors.

The work of translation and revision is one of great labor, requiring not only much time, but all requisite qualifications and resources; and yet the Apostles were the best translators the world ever saw—and their work was so perfect that it needs no revision; instead of this, it has summoned the labor of ages to translate the original documents they have left; and they have laid under contribution the learning of the world to accomplish the work.

Notwithstanding these difficulties in the way of speaking and interpreting foreign languages, the Apostles established churches throughout the world, during their personal labors, of which no one can deny. Not only do we refer to the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles in proof of this, but to the writings of the fathers, the concessions of their enemies who lived cotemporary with them, to the "History of the Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire" by Gibbon, and to the ecclesi-

astic histories of Mosheim, Neander, and others. The Greek Church in the eastern part of the Roman empire, and the Catholic Church in the western—the Paulicians, the Nestorians, and the Waldenses, all bear witness to the fact.

Indeed, Christianity can be traced back in one unbroken line from the present day, to the times of the Apostles. It is a river whose headwaters are to be found in the twelve Apostles on Mount Zion, and which has run through Asia, Africa, and Europe, and reached our own country, spreading peace and prosperity wherever it has gone, and leaving the monuments of its divine origin on all its banks.

THREE PROPOSITIONS.

We shall now state three propositions; and would say to our readers, that one of them, from a consideration of the facts already adduced, must be true.

1st. Either the Apostles must have been the most learned and best educated men in the languages the world ever saw before they undertook their mission; or,

2d. They must have been accompanied and assisted in their mission by the most thoroughly learned men the world has ever known; or,

3d. They were supernaturally endowed with the gift of tongues.

It will at once be admitted, that if the last of these propositions is true,—then Christianity is from God,—it must be divine.

There is no escape from the conclusions to which these propositions lead, and we now invite your special attention to them.

And FIRST—the learning of the Apostles. But little need be said on this head, as but few, if any, will contend for it. In the absence of all counter testimony, it must be admitted that they, in point of education, were extremely illiterate. Our Saviour chose them from the humblest walks of life; and chose them because they belonged to the common people. He calls them "babes" in comparison with the sages and the learned of antiquity. One of them was a tax-gatherer, and the balance of the original twelve were fishermen,—and all of them Galileans—for "their speech betrayed them." Like their master, they enjoyed no advantages from the rabbis or the schools, but were plain, honest, and unlettered men. Besides they were full-grown men when they became his disciples, and unused to study, and had neither time, disposition, means, or previous qualifications to make any attainments in literature,—especially in language,—

the most difficult of all attainments to those who have not had some previous taste for its pursuit, and who in early life have not been schooled in its acquisition. Indeed, they could not speak well their own language, and would have been put to shame before an enlightened audience of their own countrymen, if thrown simply upon their natural or acquired resources. How could it have been otherwise? Oratory at best is a rare endowment, and but few with all the advantages of education attain it. But to suppose that men taken from the office of tax-gatherers, and from their fishing-tackle, whose employment demanded but a feeble vocabulary, and whose associations in life were among the lowest classes, could in a day mount up to the highest eminence as logicians and orators, is beyond all belief. And yet no man ever wielded such power over public audiences as the Apostles; and no specimens of eloquence can equal theirs. And as to the effects produced—the history of the world is their witness! None such were ever known.

The fewest of men can speak well in two or more languages. All who have tried it, find serious difficulties in their way, and have given the preference of one language over that of another. They may speak with ease and effect in one, but hesitate and stammer in two lan-

guages. Take a German or Frenchman, if he has learned our language after he has reached maturity, he will never be able to dispossess himself of the provincialisms and idioms of his own tongue, or speak with equal freedom in ours.

The very muscles of the face, and other organs connected with speech, become so fixed and rigid, that they give to the different nations of the earth, in a great measure, their physiognomical peculiarities. More depends on this, for the difference in the characteristic expression of the face, than is generally supposed. And this discipline of the organs of speech presents insuperable difficulties in the way of articulating freely in a foreign language, not having employed the muscles and other parts of the organs of speech necessary to give a free, full, and perfect utterance to the sounds expressed in that language; and the difficulty of speaking it with ease and perfection have always been felt. But this difficulty was overcome by the Apostles; no complaint in regard to the manner of their oratory was made. The Apostle Paul refers to the charge made against him by his enemies, that his "speech was contemptible." But this was the language of jealousy or of malice; or it may have referred to the want of finished rhetoric, after the Grecian models, which the Apostle dis-

dained, lest the faith of the converts might rest 'in the wisdom of men rather than in the power of God."

It is the work of a lifetime to learn to speak well in one's own vernacular, and few ever reach it. Look at the labors of Demosthenes and Cicero; of William Pitt and Burke; of Clay and Webster; and yet there were elements of power, as orators, they never reached, or could reach.

Of all the efforts of the human mind this is the most difficult, and when attained, the grandest. No intricacies of machinery are so occult, no achievements of art so great, as the interweaving and construction of an effective speech. There are a thousand things to be taken into the account, and all are necessary to reach the result.

A speaker arises, and does not know the first word he shall utter, much less the first sentence. He opens his mouth and the word is there; he speaks it, and another is at hand; a sentence is spoken, and another is ready, to be born out of his prolific brain. And these may all be uttered with reference to something yet before him, and the whole speech is to elaborate a single proposition, or reach some grand conclusions. And all this is to be done within the space of an hour, under the embarrassment consequent upon the

presence of an audience,—mortifying slips of memory,—scarcity of language and of matter; and ten thousand accidents, only known to him who undertakes it. It is no wonder that there are so few who are able to accomplish this; the greater wonder is, that any one should do it at all.

Even men of letters have been found deficient in conversation. Corneille, whose genius resembled that of Shakspeare, and who so forcibly expresses his sentiments in writing, was insipid in conversation. He could not even speak that language of which he was so great a master with his pen.

The deficiencies of Addison are well known. He preserved a rigid silence among strangers—the silence of meditation, having no gift of conversation.

"La Fontaine," says La Bruyere, "appeared coarse, heavy, and stupid: he could not speak or describe what he had just seen;" and yet what freedom with the pen.

Isocrates, so celebrated for his beautiful oratorical compositions, "was so timid that he never ventured to speak in public." He could furnish speeches for others, but he could not use them to any effect himself.

Dryden said of himself, "My conversation is

slow and dull, my humor saturnine and reserved. In short, I am none of those who endeavor to break jests in company, or make repartees." And the reason doubtless was, his utter inability to do it.

Of Elihu Burrit, it is said, that he can read some forty or fifty different languages. He is quite a prodigy in the art. But he has never acquired much fame as a public speaker. Though he has reached some eminence, yet no one ranks him among our best and most popular orators; and though he may acquire a new language in a few months by the aid of his previous studies, and read with ease and profit many of the dead and living languages, yet he would not be able to stand before a learned assembly of Frenchmen or Germans, and deliver an extempore address with the same ease and fluency, as before an English audience. It is one thing to learn a language so as to read it, and quite a different thing to have at command the ready coin to use as occasion may require. Searching into the lexicon may do for the study, but it will not answer for the forum or the pulpit. The bullion may be in the mint, but the coin is needed for circulation.

IV c will venture here to say that if the Apostles at their time of life, had by dint of study learned

the Greek language, or the Latin, so as to have read Demosthenes and Cicero, they could not have constructed a speech of ten minutes length, that would have been listened to in these languages either in Athens or in Rome.

It is therefore incredible that these men by education simply, should have spoken intelligibly any language but their own, and their resources must have been exceedingly limited even in that. But we will dismiss this postulate, as it cannot be for a moment defended. No one will say, in the ordinary sense of the term, the Apostles were learned men.

But **SECONDLY**, could not the Apostles have had interpreters—men properly educated—who might have translated the one language in which they spoke, into all the languages in which Christianity was propagated. And was not this the method adopted by them, both for its introduction and propagation? Let us candidly examine this postulate, and see if it will stand the test, and serve as a basis for the argument designed to be built upon it.

We readily admit that if it can be shown indubitably, that the Apostles had a corps of interpreters at command, and who translated their vernacular speech into all the languages in which Christianity was sent, it would go far to weaken

our confidence in the supernatural evidence for its truth; and therefore we shall carefully examine the ground of this assumption.

And, first, there is no evidence to be found in the Sacred Writings that any such corps of interpreters were associated with the Apostles; or that at any time even, they were needed by them. Neither in profane or sacred history have we any intimations of the fact. In all their conversations and speeches, they were thrown upon their own resources, and never in one single instance did they summon to their aid an interpreter. It must be remembered also, that much of the labors of the Apostles was carried on by familiar conversation.

That there were interpreters found in the churches among the disciples, is true: but this was a "gift," equally with that of "tongues," conferred upon them by the Apostles, in the name of Christ. But these interpreters aided the ordinary Christians in their social teachings in their mixed assemblies, and also for the instruction and conviction of unbelievers who came among them. But in no instance were these ever employed by the Apostle, to aid them in their appropriate work

This gift among Christians served a different purpose. Hear what an Apostle has said on

this subject: "There are it may be so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification. Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian; and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me." "If any speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church: and let him speak to himself and to God." (1 Cor. xiv. 10, 11; 27, 28.)

Thus the use of tongues in the church was not for display, to nourish spiritual pride. The exercise of the gift was inhibited, unless an interpreter should be present. Even the "Spirit of the prophets was subject to the prophets." They could give utterance to the thoughts revealed to them or not, as prudence dictated.

Again; the expense of such a body of men as professional interpreters would have been enormous. How could the Apostles have borne it? What means had they, or resources in the way of money, or wealth to draw upon, in aid of such a work? Peter and John in the portico of Solomon's temple said, "Silver and gold we have none," when a beggar asked of them alms. And Paul when speaking of himself and fellow-

laborers—the Apostles, says, "As poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things." (2 Cor. vi. 10.) If they had needed such aids in the work of propagating the Gospel in all languages, and if it was possible to obtain suitable persons to assist in the work, it is evident from the poverty of the twelve Apostles, and from that of Paul the Apostle, that the expense of such an appendage could not have been borne. Besides, it must be remembered, that in anticipation of all such help, the Gospel was to be preached in new fields, and to new tribes, and to the very men from whom the Apostles subsequently received aid in its further propagation. If they received assistance in the way of money or goods as they certainly did from the congregations they planted, where did they obtain the necessary aid in planting them? We can readily see how the shepherd could feed from the Sock he owned; but the question most difficult to be settled is, how he obtained the nock without any means at all! Like other preachers, the Apostles in that day, "went forth, taking nothing from the gentiles." (3 John 7.)

It must be remembered that the world was before the Apostles; they had to break up the fallow ground, to plow and plant and to wait for the harvest, before they could, as husbandmen,

eat the fruit of their labor. How was it possible then for these men, to command the means requisite to sustain so expensive a work, of hiring interpreters, to an unlimited extent, to aid them in their labors?

It must also be borne in mind that there were not then to be found such facilities for the acquisition of knowledge as now. Schools of learning were few, and devoted more to philosophy than language. It was not the period for the printing press, or the telegraph, and for the universal diffusion of knowledge by the means and appliances of the present age. The world was sunk in barbarism, and enveloped in darkness.

But there are insuperable difficulties in the way of such a theory as we are now considering, we shall only simply refer to them. The Apostles, to find an interpreter, would be compelled to speak in the language he used, and this would presuppose their superior and unexampled erudition. They would be obliged to And interpreters who could not only speak their own vernacular, but that of the Apostles; or how could they have any free interchange of speech?

The Apostles would be compelled to make converts of them before their services could be secured, or if secured, would prove available

But how could they reach them in the absence of a common language? How would the Apostles have access to their minds, if they could not address them in a language they understood?

Besides, the words of the Spirit are peculiar to the spiritual nature of the Christian religion, just as chemistry and the arts have a language of their own; and until initiated, it would be impossible to give a full expression of all the nice shades of thought, and sublime utterances of the Spirit of wisdom, of glory, and of God.

We now proceed to the examination of the THIRD proposition, viz: That the Apostles were supernaturally endowed.

1. That they overrun the Roman empire is most certain, as we already have seen; and as this work could not have been accomplished by ordinary methods, or by natural means, we are shut up to the necessity of believing that it must have been done by the use of those divine and supernal powers which alone can account for the success consequent upon the labors of the Apostles.

Many ambitious men have conceived the idea, and some have undertaken the task, of conquering the world. The Apostles have been the only persons who realized the idea and did the work; not with carnal weapons, but with the

sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Not by might or by power of earthly origin, but by the aid of truth and testimony, demonstrated by the signs and wonders from heaven which attended their mission. It was not by sinew and bone, but with tongues of fire; not by an arm of flesh, but by the arm of Omnipotence. It was not the bodies of men, but their spirits they subdued, by the overwhelming power of the great facts and potent arguments they wielded. It was a bloodless conquest, so far as their enemies were concerned; and it gave the conquered the possession of a kingdom—a kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. It was like the stone of Daniel, cut out of the mountain without hands, and filling the whole earth; or like the grain of mustard seed of the parable, becoming a great tree, under whose shadow the nations might take shelter. It was not Jacob threshing the mountains, but the God of Jacob, tossing them from their firm foundations, and casting them into the sea. The hills were leveled and the valleys exalted, and a highway cast up which swept the globe. It was not the three hundred holding the difficult passage of the Thermopylae, but the twelve holding in check the world which they conquered. History illuminates its pages with the renowned acts of its

heroes and statesmen, and we delight to do them honor; but the brightest of all celebrates the achievements of the Galilean fishermen. These have "won eternal fame." Their work, according to the promise of their leader, "remains," and will forever remain.

The Apostle speaks of the success attending the preaching of the Gospel as a part of the "mystery of godliness." "God was manifested in the flesh, justified by the Spirit, seen of angels, preached to the Gentiles, *believed on by the world.*" Truly, this was a mystery—a secret, only now revealed. No such occurrence had ever before happened. How strong was this in proof of the resurrection of the Messiah, of the descent of the Holy Spirit, and of the supernatural gifts bestowed on the Apostles.

To believe that not only barbarians, Scythians, bond and free—the elegant Greeks and the warlike Romans, would forsake their native religion, the gods of their idolatry, and the corruption of the world, and believe in a religion that sought the overthrow of all others, and reformed the lives of men from the habits and principles of a most corrupt age,—to believe this could be done by the mere force words, or the power of oratory, without supernatural aid, is to attempt to account for a most extraordinary effect in the absence of

a competent cause, and to believe in a greater miracle than any recorded in the Scriptures of truth.

That the Apostles were successful in establishing churches and propagating Christianity in far and distant fields, and among people speaking a great variety of languages, we have already seen. How could this have been effected on any known principles of an ordinary character? The history of missions in pagan lands in our own day, with all the means at our command, with the superior light of the present century, with the aid of learning, the labors of the press, with Bible translations, with the facilities of travel and the persevering efforts of the benevolent and charitable at home, and the self-sacrificing efforts of missionaries abroad,—all show how difficult is the task, how slow the progress, and how few the converts that have been made. Let the success of missions in Burmah, in Africa, in China, in the islands of the seas, and among the Indians in our own land, testify to the formidable difficulties in the way of prosecuting this heaven-inspired work. With the Bible translated into more than two hundred different languages, with hundreds of missionaries and the press at their command, with the prayers and the co-operation of hundreds of thousands of Christians at home,

the Gospel has met with but feeble success in pagan lands, and its genuine fruits may well be questioned in thousands of instances, both at home and abroad. A single discourse on the day of Pentecost, by the Apostle Peter, made more real converts to Christianity than the united labors of the Christian world in pagan lands within a quarter of a century in the present age.

During the apostolic age, the Gospel had its converts from Judea to the uttermost parts of the earth.

Whilst the *Acta Pilata*, as referred to by Tertullian, affords the most indubitable evidence of the fact of our Saviour's life and mission, his sufferings and death, and the existence of the Christian sect which he originated, all of which he communicated to the Roman senate; being procurator of Judea and a Roman governor, it was his duty to make known the remarkable events which occurred under his administration to the power that sent him. And whilst the testimony of Suetonius, a Roman historian, who flourished under the reign of Trajan, A. D. 116, which declares that "Claudius Caesar banished the Jews from Rome, because they raised continued tumults, instigated by Christ," or rather by Christians. And Celsus, the bitterest enemy of Christianity, who wrote in the latter end of

the second century speaks of "Jesus as the founder of Christianity, as having lived a short time from his day," and witnesses the principal facts of his history, copies largely from the books of the New Testament, and speaks of them by the names which they now bear; and Porphyry, and Julian the Apostate, confirm the same; whilst Tacitus, the Roman historian, gives in substance the following testimony:

" That Jesus Christ was put to death as a malefactor, by Pontius Pilate, procurator under Tiberius. That from Christ, the people called Christians derived their name. That this religion ('superstition') had its rise in Judea, whence it spread, notwithstanding the ignominious death of its founder and the opposition which his followers met. That it was propagated from Judea into other parts of the world, as far as Rome: when, in the tenth year of Nero, they, the Christians, were very numerous. That its professors were reproached, hated, and underwent grievous persecutions." And that Gibbon, on this testimony of Tacitus, has the candor to remark, that "the most sceptical criticism is obliged to respect the truth of this extraordinary fact, (the persecution of the Christians under Nero), and the integrity of this celebrated passage."

"Its truth," he adds, "is confirmed by the diligent and accurate Suetonius, who mentions the punishment which Nero inflicted upon the Christians." And it may be proved "by the consent of the most ancient manuscripts, by the inimitable character of Tacitus, by his reputation, which guarded the text from interpolations of pious fraud; and by the purport of his narrative."

Whilst we have the united and concurrent testimony of friends and foes, for the early and rapid spread of Christianity—of Tacitus and Pliny, of Celsus and Julian, of Justin Martyr and Tertullian, of Origen and Jerome, and a host of others, the facts which they give us only corroborates the statements incidentally found in the writings of the Apostles and Evangelists of the New Testament, to which already we have referred.

Surely no proof can be wanting to establish all the assumptions we have made in regard to the truth of Christianity; and no testimony can be less free from suspicion than what has been adduced on all the premises found in this argument.

How false is the assertion, that all our witnesses are among our friends, and therefore should not be trusted. If indeed this were true, no men have ever given better evidence of their

integrity and faithfulness, and of their competency in relating matters of fact, of which they were eye and ear witnesses. Many of them sealed this testimony with their Mood. They were not martyrs to an opinion, an idle speculation, to a refined philosophical theory, but to matters of fact, which fell under their personal observation.

The extent of the Roman empire we have already seen, reaching from the Atlantic on the west, to the Euphrates on the east; and from the Rhine and the Danube on the north, to the deserts of Arabia and Africa, on the south. With the exception of Great Britain, soon after subdued by Agricola, the interior of Africa, and the hardy barbarians of northern Europe, her proud eagles had become the standard of the world.

The universal sovereignty of Rome was a fit symbol of the triumphant march of the New Empire of the Anointed Lord of the Universe.

The Gospel beginning in Palestine, spread throughout Asia, was carried into Italy, Spain, Arabia, and Africa, and the islands of the seas, and amid all the barbarous and babelized tongues of the earth; and that, too, by the labors of the Galilean fishermen and Paul the Apostle of the Gentiles. The Apostles, under their unlimited commission, preached the Gospel to the world,

and in all languages to which they had access, and among all people wherever they went. If they had expressed themselves improperly or inelegantly, in bad grammar, bad accent, bad idiom, rudely, stammeringly, and with hesitation, they would have been suspected of fraud, and their labors would have proved abortive. The gift of tongues, to accomplish these results, was inevitable; and whilst it revealed the wisdom of its Author, it gave universality to that religion which was designed for the world. In vain may we object to miracles: the results of the efforts of the Apostles were the greatest of miracles; and these results no one can deny. In less than three centuries from the death of the Messiah, Christianity obtained the empire of the world, and had upon the throne an emperor who acknowledged its claims; and in the first century, by the labors of the Apostles, the commission they received was fully and legitimately acted upon. Not more certainly can the Nile, the Euphrates, the Danube, the Mississippi, be traced to their sources, than that Christianity and the churches founded by the Apostles, can be traced to these men.

The monuments of their success have stood for centuries, and will stand to the end of time; like the Osistarsen, still bearing his name; or

the great temple of Karnac built in the days of Theban splendor; the pyramids of Ghizer, on the confines of the Lybian desert; or the Sphinx amid the waving sands which conceal its base, like some preadamite monarch amid the desolations of ages; or the ruins of Thebes, of Luxor, and the Memnonium; just as these hoary relics of the past connect themselves with once living men, with mighty monarchs, and proud dynasties, now perished forever; so Christianity, through the long ages of its existence, stands like a pillar amidst the ruin of kingdoms and empires, bearing upon it the names of the twelve Apostles, and the records of the great facts which they announced, and the wonders they achieved.

The well attested facts thus brought into juxtaposition, show that their concurrent testimony cannot be equivocal; and while it is true that "circumstances cannot lie," those who relate them may: hence it is all important that the facts which constitute the circumstances should be verified, and this we have done; and when thus verified, the inevitable deductions from them are entitled to just as much confidence as if they were proved by direct testimony, or we ourselves had been eye-witnesses of them.

It often happens that the most important testimony is purely incidental. It may not have

been designed to prove the points at issue. Such testimony has the advantage of being unsuspected—it could not have been made by design; and it is deserving of great weight and consideration; and to this testimony we have appealed.

It is true that the Bible does not need this cumulative evidence to support its divinity; as every argument must primarily be subjected to the test of that evidence on which it is based; and of this suitable proof, the scriptures have quite enough to satisfy any mind. Its evidences, like the trees of the forest, have the seed within themselves. The sun has no need for a witness to declare to all eyes its light, or nature a voice to reveal its Creator. Christianity, as it came out of the hands of its Author, is its own witness, and needs no attestations from without; it does not, however, reject the humblest testimony, but like its Author, admits the "mouths of babes and sucklings" to chant its praises; and if men be silent, the very stones of the street would cry aloud in its behalf.

We have seen that from the day of Pentecost, when the number of converts consisted of 120, the Christian religion rapidly increased and continued its triumphs till it sat upon the throne in the days of Constantine. Its first offering of 3000 souls was the pledge of its wonderful sue-

cess. They soon increased to 5000; and shortly after were numbered by myriads; multitudes, both men and women, became its converts, and the Lord added, daily, "the saved" to the church of the Redeemer. It spread throughout the Roman empire and entered into Great Britain, and even Parthia and India. Pagan temples were deserted, their altars overthrown, and no purchasers found for their victims. Not only the larger cities and towns, but the open country was seized upon. No nation or tribe, no land then known, was unvisited by the heralds of salvation, from the polished Greek to the rude barbarian, until, in the third century, Christians were more numerous than the pagans. Has anything like this happened since? Is it not without a parallel in the history of the world? It is clear, to a demonstration, that the Gospel, which won such triumphs in the hands of the Apostles, must have been divine; and that it was preached with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven, in the "signs and wonders and powers" which attended its heavenly origin. In less than a century it pervaded Syria and Libya, Egypt and Arabia, Persia and Mesopotamia, Armenia and Parthia, the whole of Asia Minor, and no small part of Northern Europe. Without the secular arm to defend it, without the aid of priests or philoso-

phers, but in opposition to their combined and united forces, it achieved the conquest of the globe.

We need no stronger evidence of its supernatural origin and aid, than the results which followed its first exhibition. The independent testimonies to which we have appealed, and the history of the world for eighteen centuries past, is a witness for its truth.

The Gospel! the Gospel! the wonder of ages! the theme of the Apostles and prophets! the revelation of infinite wisdom and love! the offspring of mercy and kindness to our race. It speaks the highest thoughts of God to man, and reveals the innermost thoughts of man to his Maker: it speaks of the grace and philanthropy of the Father of spirits; of the fall of man, and his recovery; of the cross and the crown; of the soul's immortality and the resurrection to eternal life of the bodies of men. Mighty river of thought! beginning in the mountains of Judea and flowing onward through the centuries which are past, it fertilizes and refreshes all that it touches; the wilderness and the solitary places are made glad for its approach. The thirsty and the weary drink of its waters and are refreshed! The despondent and the sorrowful take hope amid "the sands of time." and press onward to the

grave and to the life beyond. Move on thou mighty river, deepening and widening thy resistless tide, making glad the earth and the city of our God! Commerce and trade, the ships of every sea and the products of every clime, are on thy waters; and the hopes of a world are launched upon thy waves. Roll on, till the great Ocean is reached to which thou art tending; and it will yet be seen that humanity is rich in the inheritance of this great treasure.

We commend to the reader this heaven-descended religion. We unite our voice with the ten thousand voices of the past; with the more silent and solemn utterances of the patriarchs; with Abel at the altar, with Enoch before the flood; with Noah, a preacher of righteousness; with Abraham, "the friend of God;" with Isaac, who was "heir of the promises;" with Jacob, who spoke to his sons of the "coming Shiloh;" with Moses, who "talked with God;" with Samuel and all the prophets, who spake "of the sufferings of the Messiah, and the glory that should follow;" with John the Baptist, who summoned attention to "the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world;" with the Apostles, who were "eye-witnesses of his majesty," and the ambassadors of his kingdom; with all these we would urge you TO HEAR HIM, and to

submit to his reign—the Anointed Lord of heaven and earth; "the root and the offspring of David, the bright and morning star." "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come; and let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

THE END.